



Centerton Utilities

(Water/Wastewater Departments) (Franchised Utility Permitting)

February 18, 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 & Tim Mays of ESI, Heather Owens of 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 January 20, 2026. He asked if anyone had questions or concerns. Commissioner Wells stated the system stats report indicated that sewer accounts increased by about 40. The decrease of 20 water accounts is likely related to seasonal irrigation meters being taken offline during the winter months. Utility Director Attwood confirmed his assessment. 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 - Heather Owens:** Attorney Heather Owens reported that a hearing was held last week in Little Rock before the Administrative Law Judge regarding ADEQ's motion to dismiss Tulsa's appeal of the discharge permit. A ruling is expected soon. Ms. Owens will notify the Commission when a decision is issued.
- b. **Project Updates – Engineering Services, Inc. – Jeff Dehnhardt:**
- I. **Hwy 102 Water Tower #4:** Representatives from ESI reported that the Highway 102 Water Storage Tank project experienced some slowdown during the past month due to winter weather interruptions. The project is currently approximately 94% complete based on the value of work under contract. Substantial completion is now anticipated in March, with the tank expected to be placed into service at that time. Approximately \$1 million remains on the construction contract.
 - II. **Hwy 102 Widening – Utilities Relocations:** ESI reported that preparations are continuing for the Highway 102 Widening Utilities Relocation Project. A pre-construction conference is currently being scheduled, with staff working to coordinate schedules for a potential meeting next week.

The contractor has submitted submittals for the majority of project materials and construction components. These submittals are currently under review by the project engineer. ESI anticipates returning comments on these submitted materials during the upcoming week. In the meantime, project coordination and preparatory work are continuing while scheduling for the pre-construction meeting is being finalized.

- III. **Sanitary Sewer – Collection Systems Upgrades:** ESI reported that both Sanitary Sewer Collection System upgrade projects have been submitted to the Arkansas Department of Health for review.
 - The **Highway 102 Corridor project** was resubmitted on March 6 after addressing comments received during the first round of review.
 - The **McKissick Swale Corridor project** was submitted last week for initial review.

ESI indicated that the review process by the Arkansas Department of Health typically takes approximately 30 days.



Centerton Utilities

(Water/Wastewater Departments) (Franchised Utility Permitting)

During discussion, Commissioner TJ Wells asked whether the McKissick project could potentially be bid after the first round of comments. Utility Director Attwood noted that potential developments regarding state authority over collection systems may affect the project timeline, which could result in delays or future adjustments.

ESI representatives stated that bidding a project prior to final approval is sometimes done depending on the nature of review comments. Minor comments may allow the project to move forward toward bidding, while more extensive revisions could delay the process. ESI will keep the Commission informed once comments are received.

- IV. Standard Specifications Updates:** Representatives from Engineering Services, Inc. reported that updates to the Commission's Standard Specifications are continuing to progress as scheduled. ESI anticipates providing a draft of the proposed updates within the next 30 to 60 days.

ESI expects to provide a draft to Utility Director Attwood prior to the next Commission meeting so that staff can review the proposed revisions and provide input before the updates are finalized.

- V. Sanitary Sewer - Connection Options:** ESI discussed potential sanitary sewer connection options that have been under consideration by the Commission.

Approximately 18 months ago, the Commission evaluated the possibility of conveying wastewater to NACA through a 24-inch sewer line owned by the City of Bentonville located near Brookside Road. At that time, the City of Bentonville indicated the option was not available, and the Commission continued exploring other alternatives.

ESI reported that the possibility has recently resurfaced as a potential option, and preliminary discussions have occurred with representatives from the City of Bentonville. At this time, discussions remain high level and preliminary, and no formal proposal has been made. ESI indicated the Commission is willing to provide any information that may assist Bentonville in evaluating the option.

During discussion, Commissioner TJ Wells confirmed that a preliminary route alignment has been identified should a connection to the Bentonville line move forward. ESI stated that conceptual alignment exhibits have been prepared, although full construction plans have not yet been developed. Because the project scope is relatively limited, ESI indicated that construction plans could potentially be prepared within approximately 30 days if the project advances.

Commissioner Melvin Coffelt asked whether an alternate connection alignment to NACA had also been evaluated. ESI confirmed that an additional route has been explored that would connect directly to a NACA sewer line further south rather than connecting through the Bentonville system. Preliminary field work, including topographic survey and utility locates, has already been completed along that potential alignment.

C. Director's Report:

- I. Planning Project Update - Sewer Project Planning and Capacity Allocation:** Utility Director Malcolm Attwood reported on the project planning worksheets and project priority list that were recently distributed by Lorene Burns of the City of Centerton Planning Department. The spreadsheet reflects the current sewer project priority list and capacity allocations based on information provided by the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH).

Ms. Burns explained that ADH identified 1,206 previously approved lots that were not included in the earlier planning spreadsheet. These lots represent approximately 0.60 million gallons per day (MGD) of additional capacity that must be accounted for in the planning calculations.

According to the ADH correspondence (current new capacity), 0.3015 MGD of capacity is reserved for the City of Centerton, leaving approximately 0.7585 MGD available for allocation between Centerton and the City of Decatur.



Centerton Utilities

(Water/Wastewater Departments) (Franchised Utility Permitting)

Ms. Burns noted that she attempted to coordinate with Decatur to combine both cities' project lists and prioritize them together, so that projects could be ranked fairly based on readiness. However, only limited information was available regarding Decatur projects currently under ADH review. ADH records currently indicate two Decatur projects totaling approximately 0.068 MGD, although additional projects may be pending.

It was also noted that the City of Decatur has reportedly submitted a request to ADH associated with 1,000 additional lots, which could significantly impact available sewer capacity and limit the ability to approve additional development projects.

Commissioner TJ Wells asked whether the spreadsheet reflected Centerton's current capacity allocation of approximately 0.60 MGD for priority projects, which Ms. Burns confirmed based on the most recent ADH information.

Director Attwood noted that the situation remains fluid and may change in the coming weeks due to discussions occurring at the state level regarding collection system authority in Arkansas. Because this information has not yet been officially released, staff indicated that additional guidance from the State may affect how sewer capacity and project approvals are handled moving forward.

Director Attwood stated that Centerton previously requested that Decatur work with Centerton to combine and prioritize project requests for submission to ADH. However, Decatur indicated that it intends to proceed independently with its requests.

Staff indicated that Centerton will likely submit its current project priority list to ADH for capacity allocation, after which the Commission will await further directions from the State regarding how capacity requests will be handled. Director Attwood noted that the situation may evolve in the coming weeks as additional information becomes available.

- II. **Customer Service Reports – Mary Perkins:** Staff presented the Customer Service and Field Operations reports for the month. Commissioners were invited to ask questions regarding the reports.
1. **Customer Service Department - Write-Off Policy :** The Commission discussed the proposed Utility Account Write-Off Policy and Procedures for uncollected customer accounts that have been sent to collections and determined to be uncollectible.

Commissioner Robert Anderson stated that he had reviewed the proposed policy and indicated that the procedures generally reflect the practices currently followed by the utility but would formally document those procedures in policy form.

Discussion occurred regarding Section 10 – Approval Authority, which states that:

- Write-offs over \$2,500 require Commission approval, and
- Write-offs under \$2,500 may be approved by the Utility Director.

Staff explained that the provision was intended to address small balance write-offs, including penny adjustments and accounts \$25 or less that collection agencies will not pursue, and that these smaller balances would typically be processed in batch entries rather than as individual accounts. Staff also noted that small balance write-offs are generally reviewed annually and presented to the Commission in spreadsheet form with supporting documentation.

Commissioner Casteel requested clarification within the policy language to ensure that the approval authority referenced in Section 10 clearly applies to batch write-offs rather than individual accounts.



Centerton Utilities

(Water/Wastewater Departments) (Franchised Utility Permitting)

Commissioner Anderson made a motion to approve the Utility Account Write-Off Policy and Procedures, including the clarification that Section 10 approval authority applies to batch write-offs rather than individual accounts. Commissioner Wells seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Field Operations Report - Superintendent Chad Klingler: Staff presented the Field Operations Report and invited questions from the Commission.

During discussion, Commissioner Robert Anderson asked about the status of the large tapping machine, which has been in the repair shop for several months. Staff reported that the vendor has been authorized to complete the repairs and return the equipment to service.

Staff reported that January operations were significantly impacted by severe winter weather, resulting in crews working overtime under difficult conditions. During the coldest period of the month, crews responded to a major service line failure, working through the night until approximately 4:00 a.m. to restore water service to affected customers. Superintendent Klingler commended field personnel for their efforts and responsiveness during the extreme conditions.

Despite the challenging weather, it was noted that the winter conditions provided an opportunity to observe system performance under lower irrigation demand, allowing staff to better evaluate system pressures and performance without the influence of seasonal irrigation usage.

72 Tower Generator Repair: Staff reported that the generator at the 72 Tower has been out of service for approximately two months. The contracted service provider attempted multiple repairs but was unable to resolve the issue.

Staff noted that a recently hired employee with generator maintenance experience was able to troubleshoot and repair the generator, restoring it to service in approximately one and one-half hours. As a result, staff indicated that the employee may be transitioned toward a maintenance-focused role to assist with specialized equipment maintenance and reduce reliance on outside service providers.

72 Tower Pump Issue: Staff reported that Pump No. 2 at the 72 Tower experienced bearing chatter and was taken offline as a precaution. The system was operated on a single pump for several days while the issue was evaluated. Maintenance staff were able to flush debris and lubricate the bearing, restoring the pump to normal operation.

Although the pump is currently operating normally, staff noted that the equipment is aging and the underlying issue may limit the long term effectiveness of the repair.

Staff reported that replacement lead times for pumps are currently approximately 24–36 weeks, which presents potential operational risk should a failure occur. Motors are generally available more quickly and can be installed relatively easily, but pump replacements require significantly longer procurement timelines.

Staff indicated that additional evaluation is underway regarding whether the utility should order a replacement pump, rebuild an existing pump, or pursue other contingency options. Staff expects to seek Commission guidance in the near future once additional information is available.

System Redundancy Discussion: Engineering representatives noted that both the 72 Tower and the new Highway 102 Tower systems utilize two-pump configurations, with only one pump required for normal operation and the second pump serving as redundancy.



Centerton Utilities

(Water/Wastewater Departments) (Franchised Utility Permitting)

The pumps installed at the Highway 102 Tower are split-case pumps, which allow easier access for maintenance and bearing replacement in the field. The pumps currently installed at the 72 Tower are end-suction pumps, which require more extensive disassembly for maintenance and repair.

Commission discussion included potential options for maintaining spare equipment and the challenges associated with storing large pumps and motors due to safety concerns and the need for periodic operation and testing.

Staff indicated that additional analysis is ongoing regarding the best long-term strategy for pump replacement or redundancy, and that further recommendations will be presented to the Commission once the evaluation is complete.

III. **RJN Group Sanitary Sewer Flow Monitoring & Modeling Update - Utility Director Allwood:** Staff provided an update on the sewer flow monitoring and hydraulic modeling project being conducted by RJN Group.

Staff reported that one of the sewer monitoring units experienced missing data due to a shorted circuit board on the motherboard. The equipment has since been repaired and returned to service.

RJN Group is currently developing the hydraulic model for the sewer system. Staff previously provided lift station information and continues to work with the consultant to supply additional system data.

Staff indicated that information for two lift stations and certain non-residential customer water billing data is still being compiled. Although some data remains outstanding, RJN has indicated that sufficient information is available to continue model development, and the remaining data will be provided within the week.

Based on current discussions with the consultant, staff indicated that a draft hydraulic model is anticipated in the spring, potentially around May.

(5) New/Other Business:

a. **Decatur WWTP Upgrade Status – James Boston:** Mr. Boston provided an update regarding the status of improvements at the Decatur Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Mr. Boston reported that construction activities are nearing completion, with contractors expected to finish within approximately one month. One remaining membrane train replacement is scheduled for the last weekend of April.

Mr. Boston noted that ultraviolet (UV) disinfection equipment has been ordered, with some associated valves already received. Delivery of the UV unit itself is anticipated later this summer.

The upgraded system is currently operational and performing well, and operators are continuing to gain experience with the new equipment following recent training and on-site support. Initial performance results indicate that the facility is capable of treating significantly more wastewater than under the previous configuration.

Mr. Boston also noted that additional electronic monitoring equipment is on order and will assist with ongoing system monitoring and operational management once installed.

b. **Act 605 Repair Accounts Invoices – Utility Director Attwood:** The Commission reviewed two invoices (\$4,583.00 & \$10,217.00) from Freezing Compressor Solutions included in the meeting packet related to Act 605 sewer repair work.



Centerton Utilities

(Water/Wastewater Departments) (Franchised Utility Permitting)

Commissioner Anderson made a motion to approve payment of the invoices noted above from the ACT 605 account. Commissioner Coffelt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- c. **Capacity Fees Study** – Utility Director Attwood reported that a kickoff meeting was held the previous day to discuss the scope of work with Tischler Bise.

Commissioner Anderson made a motion to authorize Utility Director Attwood to execute a contract with Tischler Bise to perform a capacity fee study. Commissioner Wells seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- d. **Long Range Planning Meeting:** The Commission discussed scheduling a long-range planning meeting with representatives from Engineering Services, Inc.

Staff reported that potential dates were being considered within the next several weeks and asked whether the Commission preferred to proceed with scheduling the meeting now or wait until completion of the regional wastewater study.

Following discussion, the Commission agreed to proceed with scheduling the planning session.

The Long-Range Planning Meeting was scheduled for March 10 at 9:00 a.m.

- e. **Water Tower Logo Request:** The Commission discussed a request from the City of Centerton regarding the possibility of placing the City's logo on a water tower.

Director Attwood advised that the new Highway 102 water storage tank had only recently been painted and recommended that no additional modifications be made to that tank at this time.

Director Attwood indicated that the standpipe (72 Tower) may be a more appropriate location for the City's updated logo, particularly when the structure is scheduled for its next repainting. Staff will review the maintenance service contract with Utility Service Group to determine the timing of the next scheduled repainting of the standpipe.

It was noted that if the City wishes to proceed with placing its new logo on the standpipe, the work would need to be coordinated accordingly and could potentially occur when repainting work is scheduled. No formal action was taken.

- f. **Highway 102 Water Storage Tank – Drainage:** A question was raised by Commissioner Coffelt regarding where overflow or drainage water from the Highway 102 Water Storage Tank would discharge.

Representatives from Engineering Services, Inc. explained that a detention basin is being constructed on the north side of the tank to temporarily contain and manage water discharged from the tank. Water from the basin will then discharge offsite into an adjacent ditch line in accordance with the site drainage design.

- g. **Bond and Financial Advisory Services Procurement:** Director Attwood reported that staff will be preparing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for bond and financial advisory services related to future municipal financing.

The Commission previously discussed issuing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ); however, staff recommended using an RFP process to allow evaluation of both qualifications and proposed services.

Staff indicated the RFP will likely be advertised within the next several weeks. The purpose is to position the utility for future municipal bond financing and to strengthen the utility's financial profile when seeking bond ratings.

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Centerton Utilities

(Water/Wastewater Departments) (Franchised Utility Permitting)

- h. **Aaron Benzing – Regional Wastewater Study:** The Commission invited Aaron Benzing to provide an update on the regional wastewater study currently underway.

Mr. Benzing reported that the study team continues to work steadily on the analysis and development of recommendations. He noted that conditions affecting the study are changing rapidly, including developments related to regional wastewater coordination and system governance. As a result, some elements of the final report may reflect evolving circumstances.

Mr. Benzing indicated that the study remains generally on track for an initial draft timeframe around April, although some conclusions may include qualifiers if certain regional discussions are still ongoing.

Mr. Benzing also noted that he is scheduled to meet with the board of the Northwest Arkansas Conservation Authority (NACA), and that discussions there could potentially influence certain recommendations included in the study.

Mr. Benzing stated that the goal is to provide the Commission with actionable recommendations while avoiding unnecessary delays to the deliverable.

The Commission thanked Mr. Benzing for the update.

(6) Resolutions: None

(7) Public Comment:

- Centerton Mayor Bill Edwards expressed appreciation to Lorene Burns for the significant amount of time and effort she spent preparing the sewer project priority list and capacity allocation spreadsheet.
- Mayor Edwards also acknowledged the new mayor of Decatur, Mayor Johnson. He noted that they met with him a couple of weeks ago and want to meet with him again to discuss coordination related to sewer capacity planning in the near future.
- Mayor Edwards stated that once additional guidance from the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) is released, the utility may need to act quickly to begin releasing projects that are currently awaiting approval. He emphasized the importance of preparing project priorities in advance so that development projects can proceed once regulatory guidance becomes available.

(8) Announcements – Next Meeting is March 17th, 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 Haverkamp 2nd the motion. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned.