



# Centerton Utilities

(Water/Wastewater Departments) (Franchised Utility Permitting)

October 21, 2025

**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, 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, Nicola Hoofard, Kayla Knight.

**(2) Pledge of Allegiance**

**(3) Approval of Consent Agenda:** Commissioner Casteel introduced the minutes of Centerton Utilities from consent agenda September 16, 2025. He asked if anyone had questions or concerns. Commissioner Anderson made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Commissioner Wells seconded the motion. No members were opposed, and the motion was carried.

**(4) Old Business:**

- a. **Attorney report – Harrington Miller Law Firm - Heather Owens:** Reported that a meeting was held approximately two weeks ago regarding the Maple Estates easement. Centerton Utilities has engaged a title company to verify easement ownership, as it is unclear whether the easements in question are formally held by the utility. The matter remains ongoing pending title review.
- b. **Project Updates – Engineering Services, Inc.**
  - I. **Hwy 102 Water Tower #4: Jeff Dehnhardt with ESI:** Engineering reported that as of the last pay period (September 26), approximately 73% of the contract value has been completed. The project is running slightly behind schedule at 101% of contract time, placing it officially over the original timeline; however, the contractor is still projecting substantial completion by the end of the year or early next year. Interior tank painting has been completed, and crews have transitioned to work inside the column, preparing to pour the pump support base and interior slab. Overall progress is steady considering earlier delays.
  - II. **Hwy 102 Widening – Utilities Relocations: Jeff Dehnhardt with ESI:** This project is currently out for bids. A mandatory pre-bid conference will be held at Centerton Utilities on Thursday at 1:30 p.m. due to the complex and congested conditions along the corridor. There has been strong interest, with eleven plan holders, including several prime contractors. The bid opening is scheduled for November 6 at 2:00 p.m., also at Centerton Utilities.
- III. **Easement Acquisition Update (Highway 102 Widening): Malcolm Attwood with CU:** Reported that eight property owners have requested compensation in excess of the full appraisal value and are currently willing to negotiate at this time. These parcels are identified in red on the easement map. The timeline for any parcels that may require condemnation remains uncertain. As a reference point, Washington Regional Public Water Authority began condemnation proceedings earlier this year, and their court date is not scheduled until February, indicating that the process can be lengthy. None of the outstanding parcels appear to be part of active development at this time, though several property owners have asked questions regarding sewer availability. See report included in packet.
- III. **Sanitary Sewer – Collection Systems Upgrades: Jeff with ESI:** Engineering reported that the collection system upgrades will be delivered as two separate projects. The first project, which includes improvements along the Highway 102 corridor down to the Allen Road Lift Station, has progressed to the plan-review stage. Updated plans were delivered to Centerton Utilities for final internal review. After staff provides any final comments or minor revisions, the plans will be submitted to the Arkansas Department of Health for initial review.

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The second project focuses on capacity upgrades in the northern portion of the system along the McKissic Creek interceptor drainage. Field crews began data collection this week and expect to complete that work within the next several days. Once the data is received and incorporated, engineers anticipate being ready to meet with CU staff within approximately 60 days to review preliminary design progress.

IV.

**Decatur WWTP Status: Malcolm Attwood:** Reported that a meeting was held last week with representatives from the City of Decatur following their recent public comment hearing regarding the requested permit increase. Oklahoma submitted comments primarily related to TMDLs, nitrogen, and phosphorus. The regulatory process now includes a 30-day review period, followed by a 30-day appeal window, with the permit decision anticipated before the end of the year. Construction at the Decatur Wastewater Treatment Plant remains on schedule, including progress on the membrane system, with completion still projected for late this year. Director Attwood also noted that Decatur has engaged an engineering firm to prepare a pollutant engineering report and develop conceptual plans for future plant expansion. Early concepts include an additional 4 MGD capacity increase and two later phases of improvements; however, these items are still very preliminary.

**WWTP Decatur Update: Mayor Tharp:** Mayor Tharp provided several updates, beginning with questions from his council regarding confirmation that certain development projects are included in his project queue for review. He noted that only developments currently in the queue are being advanced. The Mayor reported on the ADEQ public hearing held in Little Rock regarding Decatur's application to increase wastewater treatment capacity. The hearing was prompted by comments submitted by the City of Tulsa, whose attorney attended and read prepared remarks. Following the hearing, Mayor Tharp spoke directly with ADEQ staff, who indicated they are working through Decatur's response and anticipate issuing a favorable letter. He noted the City of Decatur has developed strong working relationships with both ADEQ and the Health Department. Decatur is currently in its third application phase for increased wastewater capacity, which now includes the need for UV disinfection expansion. Decatur's current UV system is adequate, but additional capacity is needed for redundancy and reliability. The plant continues to move toward the anticipated 5.35 MGD capacity approval. Major construction projects are progressing, including the Headworks Project, the operational sludge system, and the \$6.5 million biological process project, funded through loans and local investment. The City of Decatur is also developing conceptual plans for a future expansion, potentially adding a new membrane unit to create additional floating capacity. Conceptual designs are complete, the City owns the necessary property, and the goal is to reach a "shovel-ready" stage pending identification of funding sources. These concepts were recently presented to the Decatur City Council. Mayor Tharp concluded that Decatur is investing approximately \$17 million in improvements and continues working toward long-term expansion needs.

## C. Director's Report:

- I. **Project Planning Worksheet (attached) - Utility Director Attwood:** A Record Project Clearing Worksheet from the City Planning Department was included in the Commission's meeting packet. Members of the Planning Department, including the Planning Director and staff, were present and available to answer any specific questions from the Commission regarding current or upcoming development reviews.
  
- II. **Customer Service Report: Office Manager Mary Perkins** – Reported that customer service activity for the month was routine aside from ongoing issues with Maddox Apartments, which is now three months delinquent with an outstanding balance of approximately \$55,000. Despite repeated assurances, no payments have been received. The clubhouse service has been disconnected, but the tenant's service is on. Perkins advised the next step would be to place flyers on all units notifying residents of potential disconnection. The Commission discussed providing up to 30 days' notice as a courtesy due to the number of residents affected. The property is on a single master meter, making individual billing impossible; the fire line will remain active if the main meter is shut off. Perkins noted reports that the property may be under contract for sale, though details remain unclear. Legal questions were raised and will be reviewed with the Centerton Utilities attorney. The Commission agreed to monitor the situation through late November unless ownership changes or payment is received. Perkins also recommended revisiting commercial deposit requirements in the new year.

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**Field Operations Report - Superintendent Chad Klingler:** Operations reported that activity for the month was business as usual. The Service Line Replacement Crew is working in the Cooper's Farm section of the Sienna Estates subdivision, with excavation complete and restoration planned before the holidays. The department expects to be approximately 60% complete with service line replacements by month-end. The pace of work will slow as crews encounter more complex service lines requiring additional evaluation. One recent location required boring rather than open cutting, taking one week to complete two replacements, which staff noted is sometimes necessary to avoid repeated driveway reconstruction in built-out subdivisions. A request was made to include this recurring issue in future specification revisions. Staff explained they already attempt to keep service lines out of driveways, but layout constraints in some subdivisions make this difficult. An update was also provided on the Main and Seba valve issue. The valve, located eleven feet deep between a telephone pole and guide wire, appears to be stuck closed but is not impacting service. The repair is needed to reduce valve operations during emergencies but it is not urgent. Due to depth and site constraints, the work will require equipment beyond what the utility currently has and will be scheduled accordingly.

III. **RJN Group Sanitary Sewer Flow Monitoring & Modeling – Update:** RJN Group continues to service and recalibrate all flow monitors and is actively reviewing the current monitoring data. They are also progressing with development of the hydraulic model using information received from ESI, with additional lift station data still being provided by staff. Work remains on schedule. The significant rainfall event on the 23rd is expected to provide valuable inflow and infiltration data for the monitoring period.

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

a. **Levelized Pay - Malcolm Attwood:** The Commission reviewed the annual levelized pay spreadsheet, which is based on employee tenure and is already included in this year's budget. Payments are scheduled to be issued toward the end of November.

Commissioner Anderson moved to authorize the Utility Director to execute the levelized payments. Commissioner TJ Wells seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

b. **Act 605 Repair Accounts Invoices** - Accountant Daniels presented the following invoices for payment from the Act 605 Water and Sewer Repair Accounts: Sewer Act - Instrument & Supply Inc. \$5,691.81, Water Act – Calcon Inc. three invoices totaling \$7,800 and Diamond Construction \$61,340.40.

Commissioner Anderson moved to approve payment of the invoices as presented by the Act 605 funds. Commissioner Wells seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

c. **FY2026 Budget Draft:** The Commission reviewed the preliminary draft budget for next year. Updates are still needed to reflect upcoming water and sewer rate changes, but the document remains in draft form at this stage. The proposed budget includes replacing two trucks and buying out the leases for the loader and excavator. Staffing adjustments include adding one field operator and one office staff member. Engineering support will be addressed by assigning additional duties to one field crew member to assist with plan-review, and reallocating clerical duties within the office; no new engineering position will be added. Once the updated FY2026 draft is complete, it will be distributed to the Commission. The draft budget reflects ongoing commitments, including continuation of the service line replacement contract, projected revenues of approximately \$400,000 from water and sewer sales based on anticipated new rate schedules, and significant expenditures associated with the non-reimbursable portions of the Highway 102 Widening Project and the sewer capacity upgrades. These items will reduce the utility's unrestricted surplus in 2026, though not below any required state reserve minimums or bond covenant coverage ratios.

A special meeting is scheduled for November 4th at 8:30 AM at Centerton Utilities to review the updated FY2026 draft budget prior to forwarding it to the City Council.



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d. **Water & Sewer Rate Study** – This will be addressed at the special meeting noted above.

**(6) Northwest Arkansas Regional Wastewater Study – Aaron Benzing, PE:**

Provided an update on the State's Regional Wastewater Study covering Benton, Washington, and Madison Counties. The study aims to plan for long-term growth, identify short-term capacity solutions, and evaluate potential regional approaches to wastewater management. Centerton's projected flows, treatment options, and watershed constraints will be reviewed as part of the analysis. The study is being conducted in coordination with ADEQ, the Department of Health and Natural Resources, and will not delay any projects currently underway. Mr. Benzing noted that the final recommendations will be advisory but are intended to give Centerton a clear, feasible path forward and committed to providing regular updates as the study progresses.

**(7) Resolutions – None**

**(8) Public Comment:**

- Skip Anderson requested an update on Tower Park collection system pinch points in the McKissic Creek basin, noting that their project received approval one year ago but cannot proceed until those constraints are resolved. They stated that capacity at Decatur is expected to be available in December but delays in evaluating McKissic Creek could push the timeline into early 2026, affecting their required project extension. Malcolm Attwood reported that the Highway 102 wastewater improvements are being finalized for submittal to the Health Department this week or early next week, after which engineering efforts will shift to the McKissic Creek improvements. He noted that the McKissic Creek design work is not expected to be as extensive as the Highway 102 relocation and that the primary timeline risk will be ADH review and comments once plans are submitted.
- Bill Edwards commented on recent improvements to the utility's water-loss numbers and commended the crews for their work. Also asked for an update on efforts to improve meeting recordings and make them available online. Commissioner Anderson reported that they are currently gathering information on upgraded recording equipment and options for improved public access and will provide an update once a solution is identified.

**(8) Announcements – Next meeting December 16, 2025**

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