

# Utilities Service Board Regular Meeting

6/15/2026

*Utilities Service Board meetings are available at [CATSTV.net](http://CATSTV.net).*

## Call to Order

Board President – White called the regular meeting of the Utilities Service Board to order at 5:00 p.m. The meeting took place in the Utilities Service Boardroom at the City of Bloomington Utilities Service Center, 600 East Miller Drive, Bloomington, Indiana.

**Board members present:** Kirk White, Seth Debro, Graham McKeen, Jim Sherman, Molly Stewart, David Hittle

**Board members absent:** Amanda Burnham, Megan Parmenter, Matt Flaherty

**Staff present:** Katherine Zaiger, Matt Havey, Chris Wheeler, James Hall, Matt Dabertin, Kevin White, Phil Peden, Chris Wheeler

**Guests present:** Yes.

## Petitions and Communications:

John Simpson, a contractor working on a City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation project at Roger Street near Switchyard Park, addressed the Board regarding difficulties encountered while working with City of Bloomington Utilities (CBU). Simpson discussed a dispute involving utility locates, explaining that his company had obtained a valid locate ticket and was authorized to dig. However, after work began, a CBU locator raised concerns about the dig and subsequently questioned the use of a privately owned water meter connected to a hydrant. Simpson explained that the project specifications ultimately required wet curing of concrete pavement markings, which necessitated a continuous but small water supply over several days. Simpson stated that he had been using his own meter equipped with backflow prevention and that the City had previously been aware of the arrangement. Following the locator's concerns, Simpson was informed that he could no longer use the hydrant connection and would need to rent a CBU-issued meter. Simpson objected to being told the cost would be approximately \$5,000, noting that similar meters typically cost only a few hundred dollars and that published information on the City's website listed substantially lower deposits. Simpson expressed frustration with what he viewed as a lack of cooperation from CBU while completing work on behalf of another City department.

Board President – White asked Simpson to clarify the circumstances surrounding the project, the water usage, and the hydrant connection. Simpson reiterated that only a small amount of

water was required for curing concrete and that his company was willing to pay for any water consumed, but would rather not pay \$5,000 to rent a CBU-owned meter.

Assistant Director - T&D – Hall responded to questions regarding CBU's hydrant meter policy. Hall explained that he had communicated directly with Simpson and later corrected an earlier estimate he had provided. Hall stated that CBU's current hydrant meter assemblies cost approximately \$3,950 to purchase, while the City's website still reflected older pricing information of approximately \$2,600 because it had not yet been updated. Hall noted that CBU requires the use of its own approved meter and backflow prevention equipment for safety and water accounting purposes and does not permit privately owned meters to be connected to hydrants.

Hall further explained that the original locator had approved the request because the locate ticket indicated a digging depth and distance of zero. When another locator later observed active excavation in the area, concerns arose because a water main was present nearby. Hall stated that the interaction stemmed from confusion regarding the information entered on the locate request. Simpson responded that his company routinely enters "unknown depth" on locate requests and suggested that the locate system converts unknown values to zero.

Board Member – Sherman asked for clarification regarding the \$5,000 figure and whether it represented a refundable deposit. Hall explained that the amount discussed related to the cost of the meter assembly and associated equipment, and that deposits are generally refunded when equipment is returned. Simpson stated that providing several thousand dollars up front was difficult while awaiting payment from other City departments. Simpson noted that Parks and Recreation ultimately helped provide water through alternate means, allowing the project to be completed.

White thanked Mr. Simpson for bringing the matter before the Board and stated that public feedback helps CBU evaluate operational practices and customer interactions. White acknowledged the challenges involved with utility locates, aging infrastructure, and construction coordination throughout the city.

### **Certification of Executive Session**

White stated that an Executive Session was held on May 26th. White stated that the certification listed the board members present as required, and that no final decisions were made or subject matter discussed in the Executive Session other than the subject matter specified therein. White said that the session is certified by the USB.

## Minutes

**Stewart moved, and Sherman seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the Special Session held on 5/26/2026. Motion carried, five ayes.**

**Stewart moved, and Sherman seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on 6/1/2026. Motion carried, five ayes.**

## Claims

Board Member – McKeen clarified that some of the expenses in the claims included paying off previously installed solar panels, as well as health insurance premiums for employees. White asked how much CBU has yet to pay on the solar panels; Assistant Director - Finance – Havey said he was not sure. McKeen noted a State Board of account fee, and asked whether there were any issues with the audit. Havey said there were no issues with the audit and that the audit is a standard operating procedure.

***Stewart moved, and Sherman seconded the motion to approve the Standard Invoices:***

Invoices included \$454,858.36 from the Water Fund, \$624,408.00 from the Water Construction Fund, \$319,130.44 from the Wastewater Fund, \$977,731.33 from the Wastewater Construction Fund, and \$35,947.33 from the Stormwater Fund.

**Motion carried, five ayes. Total claims approved: \$2,412,075.46**

White noted for the record that there had been a mixup with the utility bills spreadsheet approved at the 4/1 meeting, and that the revised spreadsheet today had the correct amount for the 4/1 meeting. Board Member – Stewart asked how the difference in amounts would be rectified. Havey clarified that CBU paid the correct amount but gave the Board the wrong spreadsheet in error at the 4/1 meeting.

***Stewart moved, and Sherman seconded the motion to approve the Revised Utility Bills from 4/1/2026:***

Invoices included \$3,946.78 from the Water Fund, \$5,477.09 from the Wastewater Fund, and \$780.22 from the Stormwater Fund.

**Motion carried, five ayes. Total revised claims approved: \$10,204.09**

McKeen noted that CBU was on the utility bills list and asked if CBU wrote themselves a check. Havey confirmed that CBU does pay for its own water and wastewater.

***Stewart moved, and Sherman seconded the motion to approve the Utility Bills:***

Invoices included \$138,916.78 from the Water Fund, \$121,953.79 from the Wastewater Fund, and \$149.49 from the Stormwater Fund.

**Motion carried, five ayes. Total revised claims approved: \$261,020.06**

***Stewart moved, and Sherman seconded the motion to approve the Wire Transfers, Fees, and Payroll:***

**Motion carried, five ayes. Total claims approved: \$651,221.12**

***Stewart moved, and Sherman seconded the motion to approve Customer Refunds:***

Invoices included \$1,631.13 from the Water Fund and \$8,321.92 from the Wastewater Fund.

**Motion carried, five ayes. Total claims approved: \$9,953.05**

Stewart asked what a “sinking fund” was. Havey said it’s an accounting term that describes an account that cash is moved into to make sure CBU has the cash to cover the bond payments.

***Stewart moved, and Sherman seconded the motion to approve Special Check Run:***

Invoices included \$3,293,517.81 from the Water Sinking Fund and \$1,706,022.40 from the Wastewater Sinking Fund.

**Motion carried, five ayes. Total claims approved: \$4,999,540.21**

## **Consent Agenda:**

CBU Director – Zaiger presented the following items recommended by staff for approval:

- a. Wheeler Coaching Systems, LLC, \$8,350.00, Executive leadership training at Utilities Service Center

Consent Agenda was approved as recommended by staff. Total approved: \$8,350.00 (non-chemical contracts)

## **Request Approval of Duke Easement for Fire Training Facility**

City Legal – Wheeler presented the Duke Easement for the Fire Training Facility, explaining that the easement was similar to the one brought before the Board several months ago for the daycare on Summit. Wheeler explained that Duke will be providing utility service through the easement to the new Bloomington Fire Building being built on Winston Thomas.

***Stewart moved, Sherman seconded to approve the Duke Easement for Fire Training Facility.***

**Motion carried, five ayes.**

## **Request Approval of Service Agreement with Gripp Incorporated**

Environmental Program Coordinator – Dabertin presented a service agreement with Gripp, Inc. Dabertin explained that the contract is for the maintenance of CBU’s sewer level and corrosion sensors in the sewer system, which are installed in about 20 different manholes throughout the system. Dabertin further explained that these sensors help CBU monitor overflows and backups as well as corrosion. Dabertin added that CBU has used Gripp, Inc. for the past 4 years to

maintain these sensors, and that Dabertin is hoping to continue the maintenance into mid-2027. McKeen asked if the sensors were moved around year to year or kept in the same locations. Dabertin said that CBU budgets for a certain number of relocations, so there are some that do get moved around to different locations. Dabertin added that many sensors are in locations where there have been issues with overflows in the past.

***Stewart moved, Sherman seconded to approve service agreement with Gripp Incorporated. Motion carried, five ayes.***

### **Request Approval of Third Amendment to Service Agreement with VET Environmental Engineering, LLC.**

City Legal – Wheeler presented the third amendment to a service agreement with VET Environmental Engineering. Wheeler said the contract is ongoing preparation for litigation, and clarified that the amount stated on the memo was incorrect. Wheeler explained that the amount on the amendment up for approval is \$205.51, which brings the new not-to-exceed amount to \$25,549.08. Wheeler added that the Board will likely see another amendment in the future because the mediation process is currently not successful, which means there may be preparation for a deposition coming up. Wheeler added as well that if the case goes to trial, VET will have to testify and another amendment will be necessary. White clarified that the amount being approved on the amendment was \$205.51, and Wheeler confirmed.

***Stewart moved, Sherman seconded to approve the third amendment to service agreement with VET Environmental Engineering, LLC. Motion carried, five ayes.***

### **Request Approval of Change Order Number 3 with Crider and Crider**

Capital Projects Coordinator – White presented Change Order Number 3 to an agreement with Crider and Crider, stating that its purpose is to rectify quantities and provided CBU with a deduct of \$14,800. Capital Projects Coordinator – White stated that the project has been completed, and that this would be the final change order. Board President – White clarified that CBU saved a bit of money on this project, and Capital Projects Coordinator – White confirmed.

***Stewart moved, Sherman seconded to approve Change Order Number 3 with Crider and Crider. Motion carried, five ayes.***

### **Old Business:**

Board President – White asked for an update on the Cottage Grove property, which had been having backflow issues.

Assistant Director - Engineering – Peden reported that CBU's Engineering staff has been working with the property owner and reviewing televising reports for sewer segments serving the property. Peden said that CBU staff is also scheduling both smoke testing and dye testing to help determine the source of the problem. Peden explained that dye testing will require access

to the residence, and staff has been attempting to coordinate with the property manager to arrange entry.

Peden stated that CBU recently completed sewer main replacement work within the area and is investigating whether a connection previously believed to be a sanitary sewer lateral may actually be tied into a storm sewer system. Peden said that staff reviewed both pre-construction and post-construction televising videos and found no obvious issues; however, additional testing is expected to provide more definitive information.

Peden shared additional findings from conversations with a plumber and CBU staff. Peden noted that a plumber had reportedly run a snake approximately 150 feet across the intersection and down Dunn Street before reaching the end of the line. However, when CBU staff used a camera to inspect the lateral from Cottage Grove, the line appeared to travel only a short distance from the residence. Based on these findings, Peden suggested the property may have two separate laterals, theorizing that a basement floor drain may have originally connected to one system and that later renovations converting the structure into multiple dwelling units may have added plumbing tied into a different line, potentially connected to a storm sewer.

Peden further explained that if a secondary lateral crosses the intersection and extends down Dunn Street, it may have been impacted during recent fiber optic construction because it would not have been identified through standard utility locates. Peden emphasized that these remain possible explanations and that staff hopes the dye and smoke testing will determine which system the property is connected to and identify any locations where stormwater may be improperly entering the sanitary sewer system.

Board President – White thanked CBU staff for continuing to investigate the issue and maintaining communication with the customer. Peden noted that the property had experienced seven sewer backups within the past year despite reportedly operating without similar issues for approximately 19 years, suggesting that a significant change had occurred within the system.

Board Member – Stewart asked how dye testing and smoke testing are conducted and what information each method provides.

Peden explained that dye testing involves introducing a brightly colored dye into plumbing fixtures within a building and then observing downstream storm and sanitary sewer structures to determine which system receives the flow. The test helps staff verify whether internal plumbing is connected to the correct sewer system.

Peden described smoke testing as a process in which an industrial smoke-generating device and blower are connected to a sewer manhole. The smoke is forced through the sewer system and exits through openings connected to the line. Under normal conditions, smoke is expected to emerge from plumbing vent stacks. However, smoke appearing from downspouts, yard

drains, floor drains, gutters, or other unintended locations can indicate improper connections that allow stormwater to enter the sanitary sewer system.

Peden explained that dye testing is most effective for identifying internal plumbing connections, while smoke testing is used to locate external sources of inflow and infiltration. Together, the two methods provide a comprehensive assessment of potential connection and drainage issues.

Related to earlier public comments concerning hydrant water usage, Peden offered additional context regarding CBU's hydrant meter requirements.

Peden stated that utility staff routinely monitor hydrant usage to ensure contractors are using authorized CBU-issued meters equipped with approved backflow prevention devices. Peden explained that unauthorized meters can create both billing concerns and risks to the public water supply. Peden emphasized that, while a meter may appear legitimate during a visual inspection, staff cannot verify its calibration, ownership, or backflow protection without it being part of CBU's approved program.

Peden noted that contractors occasionally use meters that are damaged, improperly calibrated, or otherwise unauthorized. Peden emphasized that CBU's requirements are intended not only to ensure accurate water accounting but also to protect the integrity of the public drinking water system. Peden referenced CBU's ongoing backflow prevention efforts and stated that approved CBU equipment meets standards specifically designed to safeguard the water supply.

**New Business: None.**

**Subcommittee Reports: None.**

### **Staff Reports:**

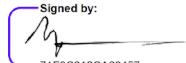
Zaiger offered congratulations to Garrett Hill in T&D, who was promoted to Specialized Crew Leader.

Zaiger also recognized CBU's 2025-2026 Hurty Award Recipients, stating that the Hurty Awards are awards that recognize individuals having 25 years or more of service with one or more Indiana public water utilities. Zaiger began with Kevin Williams, who is celebrating 45 years of service; Craig Abbott who has served for 35 years; Eric Love who served for 30 years, Al McHaley who has served for 30 years; Mike Runyon for 30 years; Brian Shipley for 30 years, and Davey Myers for 25 years. Zaiger offered many thanks to these employees for all their years of service to the CBU.

**Petitions and Communications: None.**

**Adjournment:**

White adjourned the meeting at 5:49 pm.

Signed by:  
  
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Molly Stewart, Vice President

7/1/2026

Date