

**Water and Light Advisory Board  
FY23 Annual Report  
December 14, 2023**

The Water and Light Advisory Board (WLAB) continues to provide effective guidance, recommendations and welcomes community input for the operation of the City of Columbia's Water and Light Utility. The past fiscal year was productive and successful for the WLAB, highlights include:

- The FY23 board was led by David Switzer, Chair, supported by Gregg Coffin, Vice Chair, with members Tom Jensen, Phillip Fracica, and Amanda Jacobs.
- The WLAB oversaw the completion of the electric utility cost of services study supporting recommendations to adjust electricity rates in order to financially sustain the utility operation.
- A board member assisted in the interviews and consultant recommendation for the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) implementation study.
- The board encouraged and participated in the feasibility analysis for the electric utility to reach a 100% renewable energy portfolio by 2030.
- As a follow up from the cost of services study, the board began discussions to develop a set of metrics to analyze the affordability of future City utility rates. The board agreed to continue this effort for the FY24 fiscal year.
- The board participated in the water rate evaluations, recommending needed changes and the subsequent bond sales necessary to fund the water utility and complete the approved water system capital projects.
- The board participated in Mid-Continent Independent System Operator (MISO) training which included an update on the MISO market forecast and an overview of the renewable energy markets.
- The board held a public input meeting in November 2022 seeking input from the community on various utility issues and challenges.
- The board participated in multiple "work sessions" with the Council covering the electric cost of services study, rate change recommendations, and proposed transmission upgrades recommended by the IERMP.
- The board implemented a WLAB public email to allow the community to send messages to the board on utility related issues. The board also adopted a practice to include review and discussion of the email messages in their regular scheduled meetings.
- The board developed a set of goals to help them guide their efforts through the fiscal year.
- The board began reviewing possible funding opportunities from the Federal Inflation Reduction Act for the utility operation and continues to encourage the utility seeks these opportunities where applicable.
- The board participated in training with City staff on utility energy efficiency and demand side management programs. The board confirmed the City utility has great programs already in place and recognizes the unique challenges with participation with the high level of rental property. Board encouraged efforts to reach low income and rental properties with these energy efficiency programs.

The board thanks the City utility staff for their support in providing requested information, data and reports. Additionally, the board appreciates City utility staff for their coordination, communication and facilities necessary to support the success of the Water and Light Advisory Board. The WLAB's goals and objectives for the 2024 fiscal year follow.

## FY24 WLAB Goals and Objectives

- 1) Continue to provide guidance for expanding the utility's renewable energy portfolio to achieve the community's renewable energy ordinance goals.
  - a. Support implementation of City's updated Community Solar Program
  - b. Participate in work sessions with City Council on the TEA renewable energy study
  - c. Work with Utility Staff to recommend changes to the current renewable energy ordinance past 2028 goal
  
- 2) Seek solutions to further improve the utility's successful demand side management (DSM) and efficiency programs for the community.
  - a. Review and encourage utilization of Federal and State funding opportunities for the City utility and their customers
  - b. Encourage implementation of an EV charging program or rate structure to encourage charging at off peak periods.
  - c. Support the AMI implementation Study
  
- 3) Continue to Improve WLAB communication with the community and Council, specifically:
  - a. Promote the communities use of the web linked email access to WLAB members and utility staff
  - b. Host a public meeting to seek community input on current water and electric utility issues.
  - c. Submit a FY23 annual report to City Council by the end of calendar year 2023.
  
- 4) Develop a set of utility rate metrics to evaluate rate affordability and encourage their use them to evaluate future utility rate changes.
  
- 5) Support the utility staff on the implementation of recommendations from IERMP for necessary distribution and transmission system improvements and expansions.
  - a. Support capital projects to expand the capacity and redundancy of the Perche Creek and Bolstad Substations.
  - b. Support development of a plan to upgrade Hinkson Creek Substation to avoid flooding impact and allow MU to upgrade its requested transmission access.
  - c. Continue to support the development of a transmission plan as recommended by the IERMP recommendations.