

**Water and Light Advisory Board
FY24 Annual Report
January 14, 2025**

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. This annual report for the City Water and Light Advisory Board highlights the activities and actions for the board for the fiscal year 2024.

Board Members in FY24:

Gregg Coffin, Chair

Philip Fracica, Vice Chair

Tom Jensen

David Switzer

Amanda Jacobs (through June 2024)

Jennifer Coleman (new member added in July 2024)

The past fiscal year was productive and successful for the WLAB, key highlights include:

- The WLAB board held twelve regular meetings and three special meetings FY24.
- At the request of City Council, the board completed a thorough review of the Renewable Energy Ordinance and submitted specific recommendations for updates to City Staff.
- The board made recommendations to City utility and finance on a proposed rate increase for FY25, needed due to ongoing inflationary impacts to the utility. These recommendations also included implementation for usage of specific water affordability recommendations and development of a city wide irrigation policy to address water system demands impacts.
- The WLAB continued to support necessary infrastructure project in the electrical and water systems necessary to support growth and utility reliability.
- The board updated their leadership with elections in August 2024. Philip Fracica became the new chair and Jennifer Coleman became the new vice chair for FY25.
- Numerous other accomplishments covered in the attached FY24 Goals and Accomplishments document.

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.

FY24 WLAB Goals and Accomplishments

January 14, 2025 (Final)

- 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 **(Complete)**
 - b. Participate in work sessions with City Council on the TEA renewable energy study **(Complete)**
 - c. Work with Utility Staff to recommend changes to the current renewable energy ordinance past 2028 goal **(Complete, submitted to staff in August 24 and participated in follow-up discussion with council at the December 9 work session)**

- 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 **(WLAB continued to support this effort)**
 - b. Encourage implementation of an EV charging program or rate structure to encourage charging at off peak periods. **(WLAB continued to support this effort, City implemented a EV charging pilot)**
 - c. Support the AMI implementation Study **(WLAB continued to support this project, City is currently exploring an alternate path with existing metering vendor which could expedite the project and reduce cost.)**

- 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 **(WLAB continued to support and successfully utilize the email link. WLAB addressed 16 email inquiries in its regular meetings in FY24)**
 - b. Host a public meeting to seek community input on current water and electric utility issues. **(Public meeting was held in November 2023 and WLAB is planning another for FY25)**
 - c. Submit a FY23 annual report to City Council by the end of calendar year 2023. **(Complete and submitted in December 2023, then the Chair attended Council meeting to share an overview and answer questions.)**

- 4) Develop a set of utility rate metrics to evaluate rate affordability and encourage their use them to evaluate future utility rate changes. **(Completed for water and will also be included in the water cost of services study in FY25.) (Also the WLAB reviewed the water utility financials and recommended a rate increase for FY25 to sustain financial viability of the utility.)**

- 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 PercheCreek and Bolstad Substations. **(WLAB continued to support proceeding with these needed projects)**
 - b. Support development of a plan to upgrade Hinkson Creek Substation to avoid flooding impact and allow MU to upgrade its requested transmission access. **(WLAB continues to support the efforts to address these issues.)**
 - c. Continue to support the development of a transmission plan as recommended by the IERMP recommendations. **(WLAB continues to support an East/West transmission plan for the southern part of the City utility system.)**

- 6) Support staff to conduct a capacity study in FY 25 to be prepared for changing market conditions with MISO.

FY24 WLAB Goals and Accomplishments

Additional Accomplishments:

- WLAB participated in a tour of the City Water plant in April 2024 to see the the plant condition prior to the current renovation of the plant.
- WLAB learned more about the electric vehicle (EV) industry and its impact to utilities in December 2023 presented by Peter Kelly-Detwiler, an expert in the sustainable energy industry.
- WLAB was informed by the utility staff on the City's electrical line extension policy. WLAB encouraged the utility staff to develop updates and bring back to the board for further consideration.
- Following high energy costs in February 2024 and high transmission expenses for energy sourced from the Sikeston power plant, the WLAB began completing a monthly review of the power cost adjustment (PCA) impact to City utility customers.
- WLAB drafted and shared some possible customer survey questions for the planned FY25 utility customer survey.
- WLAB participated in discussion and a presentation by Dr. Manny Teodoro, an expert in utility rate affordability in March 2024. The WLAB, then made specific recommendations to utility staff in incorporate some water affordability metrics for the City water system.
- The Missouri Joint Municipal Electric Utility Commission presented to the WLAB on the status and completion forecast on the Grainbelt Transmission project and the corresponding Ironstar renewable energy project which is now expected to deliver additional renewable energy to Columbia after 2029.