

Water and Light Advisory Board
FY23 Annual Report DRAFT
October 2023

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

- The board was led by David Switzer, Chair, and supported by Gregg Coffin, Vice Chair, 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 on developing a set of standards or metrics to analyze the affordability of the City's utility rates. The board agreed to make this a priority for the FY24 fiscal year.
- The board participated in the water rate increase evaluations and recommended needed changes and subsequent bond sales necessary to fund the water utility and completed the approved needed water systems capital projects.
- The board participated in The Energy Authority (TEA) 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 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 in utility related issues. The board also adopted a practice to include review and discussion of the messages in the 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 the 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.