

**Middle Chattahoochee Regional Water
And Sewer Authority Meeting**

February 10th, 2026 @ 7:00 PM
City of Palmetto- City Hall
595 Main Street, Palmetto, GA 30268

- I. Chairman Tony Phillips called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.
- II. Roll Call was taken by Secretary Jessica Davis with the following board members present:

The Honorable Chairman Tony Phillips

The Honorable Vice-Chair Brian Jones	
The Honorable Mayor Vince Williams	The Honorable Councilwoman Jessica Wilbanks
The Honorable Mayor Hattie Portis-Jones	The Honorable City Manager Jamila Criss

The Honorable City Manager Sylvia Redic attended the meeting on behalf of The Honorable Mayor Teresa Thomas-Smith

The attendance of the board constituted a quorum, and the meeting proceeded.

III. **Approval of Water Authority Minutes:**

The motion to approve the January 2026 Water Authority meeting minutes was made by Mayor Vince Williams and Vice Chair Brian Jones seconded the motion. **Vote: 7-0; Motion Carried**

IV. **Presentation**

Mr. Danny Johnson

1. **Atlanta Regional Commission**

Mr. Danny Johnson thanked the City Manager and the Authority for the opportunity to present. He provided an overview of the regional perspective on water resources and discussed the important role that local authorities play in addressing water-related challenges across the Metro Atlanta region.

Mr. Johnson explained that he serves as the Managing Director of ARC's Natural Resources Department and also as the Director of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District.

During his presentation, Mr. Johnson highlighted the importance of infrastructure and regional collaboration in managing water resources effectively. He noted that the Atlanta Regional Commission provides various resources and support to communities across the region, including the distribution of federal transportation funding through the Federal Highway Administration.

Mr. Johnson also discussed several regional initiatives coordinated through ARC, including programs focused on aging services, community development, workforce development, and the Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) program, which supports community planning and development across the region.

Mr. Johnson explained that Metro Atlanta sits at the headwaters of many of the state's major river basins, including the Flint River Basin and the Chattahoochee River Basin, meaning that much of the state lies downstream from the region. Because of this geographic position, the region has a significant responsibility to manage water resources carefully and responsibly.

He noted that Metro Atlanta relies heavily on surface water sources, as the region has limited access to groundwater compared to other parts of the country and South Georgia. Approximately 99% of the region's water supply comes

from surface water, primarily supported by reservoirs such as Lake Lanier and Allatoona Lake, which were constructed by the federal government in the 1950s. These reservoirs provide critical water storage capacity, helping the region manage periods of drought as well as flood events during heavy rainfall.

Mr. Johnson also discussed the importance of managing water resources in light of variable rainfall patterns, which can fluctuate significantly from year to year. The ability to store water in reservoirs allows the region to maintain stability in its water supply despite these fluctuations.

He further explained that water resources in Georgia are part of shared interstate river systems, meaning that water used upstream may also be relied upon by communities downstream. As a result, water allocation and management have been the subject of long-standing legal disputes often referred to as the “water wars,” involving Georgia, Alabama, and Florida. These disputes center on how the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers manages water releases from federal reservoirs.

Mr. Johnson noted that while litigation has occurred for several decades, recent outcomes have secured water supply access for Metro Atlanta, including approved water control manuals governing the operation of key reservoirs. However, he emphasized the continued need for responsible water stewardship, conservation, and water quality protection to ensure long-term sustainability.

Mr. Johnson also provided an overview of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District, which includes 15 counties and 97 cities. The district operates under a governing board of 26 members representing local governments as well as appointments from state leadership. The board adopts a regional water resources management plan every five years, outlining policies related to water supply, conservation, land development, and infrastructure planning.

The most recent plan was adopted in 2022, with the next update scheduled for 2028. Mr. Johnson explained that the planning process includes technical advisory committees, citizen advisory councils, and extensive stakeholder engagement to ensure community participation.

He further noted that the plan contains required action items for communities within the district, and the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) conducts compliance audits every five years. Communities must demonstrate good faith compliance with the regional water plan in order to qualify for new or expanded water permits and eligibility for state funding.

Mr. Danny Johnson also informed the Authority that Fulton County cities and utilities are currently undergoing an audit process conducted by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD). He noted that communities should have recently received correspondence from EPD requesting responses related to compliance with various action items outlined in the regional water management plan.

Mr. Johnson stated that ARC and EPD are working together to provide technical assistance to local jurisdictions. A meeting has been scheduled to assist South Fulton communities with understanding the audit requirements, addressing any missing information, and answering questions from staff who may be new to the process.

The technical assistance meeting will take place on March 4 at 10:00 a.m. at the Palmetto Historic Train Depot. Mr. Johnson encouraged the board and relevant personnel to attend if they have questions regarding the audit process.

Mr. Johnson also shared several regional success stories related to water conservation efforts. He noted that since 2000, per capita water usage in Metro Atlanta has decreased significantly—from approximately 150 gallons per

person per day to around 100 gallons per person per day. This reduction has been attributed to several factors, including:

- Improved plumbing efficiency standards, such as low-flow toilets and showerheads
- Implementation of tiered water rate structures, which increased costs for higher water usage, particularly outdoor irrigation
- Public awareness efforts during drought periods and the Great Recession

He noted that these conservation efforts have helped Metro Atlanta maintain lower water consumption levels even as the population has grown, contributing to the region's success in demonstrating responsible water stewardship.

Mr. Johnson also briefly discussed the growing presence of data centers in the region and their potential impact on water resources. He explained that data centers require significant cooling systems, which can increase water demand depending on the technology used. He noted that many large data center providers are adopting closed-loop cooling systems, which significantly reduce water consumption compared to traditional cooling methods. He encouraged local jurisdictions to remain informed about these developments so they can have informed discussions with developers regarding water usage and infrastructure planning.

City Manager Sylvia Redic emphasized the importance of cities remaining attentive to emerging issues related to water usage and development. She noted that individual cities should take responsibility for ensuring that they are monitoring such matters and verifying relevant information for their communities.

Mayor Hattie Portis-Jones asked whether the list referenced during the presentation represented an order of water usage.

Mr. Danny Johnson clarified that the list was not presented in order of water usage. He explained that while discussions often focus on a limited set of factors, technology and development practices continue to evolve. Mr. Johnson stated that ARC provides extended presentations and resources that help communities prepare for future developments, including data center construction. These resources encourage local governments to adopt appropriate ordinances and development codes so that communities are prepared to address infrastructure and resource needs when such developments are proposed. He noted that while closed-loop cooling systems can reduce water consumption in data centers, they may require increased energy usage or adjustments to facility design.

Mayor Portis-Jones also requested clarification regarding the geographic boundaries of the region and the ongoing conversations within the region related to water resources.

Mr. Johnson responded by explaining that the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District includes 15 counties across the Metro Atlanta region, extending from Hall County in the north, Bartow County in the northwest, Henry County in the southeast, and Coweta County in the southwest. He noted that while many parts of the region are already experiencing significant suburban development, other areas particularly along the outer edges of the region remain more rural.

Mr. Johnson explained that the district includes all fifteen counties because regional planning anticipates that growth will continue to expand over the next 50 to 80 years. As a result, it is important for all jurisdictions within the district to implement responsible water stewardship practices, including appropriate development buffers, floodplain protections, and land use regulations, in order to protect water resources and ensure sustainable growth for future residents.

Mayor Hattie Portis-Jones asked for clarification regarding the concept of regionalization and whether such discussions would involve all counties within the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District or primarily counties located in the southern portion of the region.

Mr. Danny Johnson responded by referencing a regional map and explained that, from a practical infrastructure perspective, potential regional water supply discussions would likely involve jurisdictions adjacent to Fulton County, including neighboring communities such as Coweta County, Fayette County, Clayton County, Douglas County, and the City of Atlanta. He noted that these areas are geographically positioned in a way that makes regional infrastructure connections, such as water transmission lines, more feasible.

Mr. Johnson explained that the cities of Union City, Fairburn, and Palmetto are located along a ridge line that separates watersheds within the region. He noted that water drainage patterns are significant when considering water supply infrastructure. Areas east of the ridge primarily drain toward the Flint River Basin, while areas to the west drain toward the Chattahoochee River Basin, which ultimately flows south toward Columbus.

Mr. Johnson also noted that portions of the City of Palmetto currently receive water supply from the Coweta County Water Authority, while other communities in the area rely on water supplied through existing infrastructure connections, including systems that originate from the City of Atlanta.

He further explained that historically, many communities in southern Metro Atlanta avoided using the Chattahoochee River as a water supply source due to significant water quality concerns in previous decades. Prior to the early 2000s, the river experienced frequent sewer overflows from the City of Atlanta's aging sewer system, particularly during heavy rainfall events.

Mr. Johnson noted that following legal action and a consent decree agreement between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the City of Atlanta, the city invested approximately \$5–6 billion in sewer infrastructure improvements to address these issues. As a result of these improvements over the past two decades, water quality in the Chattahoochee River has significantly improved, making it a viable and reliable source for treated drinking water.

Mr. Johnson also discussed current infrastructure developments in the region, noting that the Coweta County Water Authority is constructing a pump station along the Chattahoochee River near Plant Yates. The facility is expected to have a capacity of approximately 26 million gallons per day, which will support the Cedar Creek Reservoir and strengthen the county's long-term water supply.

He explained that many southern counties, including Clayton, Fayette, and Coweta, have historically relied on smaller watersheds and rainfall-fed sources, which can be vulnerable during extended drought conditions. Access to the Chattahoochee River as a water source significantly increases regional resilience and reliability during drought periods, allowing communities to diversify and strengthen their water supply systems.

Mr. Danny Johnson continued his presentation by discussing the regional water supply infrastructure connected to the Chattahoochee River. He explained that the City of Atlanta withdraws water from the Chattahoochee River upstream near Peachtree Creek, located in the northwest portion of the city.

Mr. Johnson noted that many jurisdictions in the southern portion of Fulton County receive a significant portion of their water supply from the City of Atlanta's water treatment system. Water treated at Atlanta's facility must be pumped across the city and county through a network of transmission pipelines to reach communities in the southern region.

He explained that many of these pipelines were constructed several decades ago, and as infrastructure ages, jurisdictions will eventually need to reinvest in maintenance, upgrades, and replacement to ensure system reliability. Mr. Johnson noted that Atlanta currently operates one of the older water distribution systems in the region, which supplies a large portion of water to southern jurisdictions. As a result, reliance on this system presents potential long-term infrastructure considerations.

Mr. Johnson also referenced the Middle Chattahoochee Regional Water Authority withdrawal point, noting that the Authority holds permits allowing it to withdraw water directly from the Chattahoochee River at a designated location. He emphasized that this withdrawal capability represents a valuable and resilient water supply source for the southern Metro Atlanta region because the river's flow is supported by Lake Lanier and other upstream reservoirs, providing a stable and reliable water supply.

He further noted that the Authority currently holds a permitted withdrawal capacity estimated at approximately 12 to 14 million gallons per day, with potential opportunities for growth if additional infrastructure or regional partnerships are considered.

Mr. Johnson explained that the existence of this withdrawal location could present opportunities for regional collaboration, as the infrastructure could potentially support additional jurisdictions seeking alternative water supply sources.

He also discussed the operational benefits of interconnected water systems, explaining that when systems are connected and pressurized from multiple directions, it can significantly improve system reliability. In such systems, water can flow from different sources, allowing operators to isolate pipeline breaks or maintenance areas without disrupting water service across entire communities. By contrast, when a system relies on a single transmission line, a major pipeline failure could potentially interrupt water supply to large areas until repairs are completed.

Mayor Hattie Portis-Jones asked whether the potential benefits discussed could provide sufficient justification for the City of Atlanta to support a regional infrastructure project related to water supply.

Mr. Danny Johnson responded that he could not speak on behalf of the City of Atlanta directly; however, he noted that the concept could present a meaningful point of discussion if presented to the City, particularly given the regional infrastructure considerations.

City Manager Tony Phillips added that the City of Atlanta currently maintains aging infrastructure that pumps water approximately 33 miles from its treatment facility in northwest Atlanta to serve communities in the southern portion of Fulton County. He suggested that a regional solution supporting water supply in the southern area could provide significant regional benefits, particularly when weighed against the cost of maintaining long-distance infrastructure.

Mr. Johnson agreed, noting that an interconnected system providing backup supply for the South Fulton area would strengthen regional reliability. He emphasized that much of the southern portion of the metro region lacks a large, consistent river system and historically relies on smaller watersheds and rainfall-fed sources.

Mr. Johnson explained that because the region sits near the headwaters of the Flint River and Ocmulgee River basins, water availability is more dependent on rainfall compared to areas served by larger rivers such as the Chattahoochee. While the region has not experienced a drought severe enough to fully stress these systems, he noted that planning for long-term resilience remains important.

Mr. Johnson stated that access to Chattahoochee River withdrawals provides a more reliable water source due to the river's flow being supported by upstream reservoirs, which can help protect communities during severe drought conditions.

Vice-Chair Brian Jones asked a question regarding the Coweta County withdrawal project, specifically whether the county is constructing a reservoir or already has an existing reservoir as part of its water supply system.

Mr. Danny Johnson clarified that Coweta County currently operates a reservoir that is supplemented by a pump station drawing from a nearby tributary, which helps maintain water levels within the reservoir. He explained that the new Chattahoochee River pump station project will provide a more reliable source of water to replenish the reservoir and strengthen the county's long-term water supply.

Vice-Chair Brian Jones asked whether the Authority's system, which relies on direct withdrawal from the river without a reservoir, presents a disadvantage in terms of redundancy during drought conditions.

Mr. Johnson explained that the primary vulnerability associated with direct withdrawal systems is not necessarily drought, but rather operational disruptions or water quality events. He noted that if pumps were to fail or if water quality issues occurred upstream, utilities relying solely on direct river withdrawal might need to temporarily halt intake operations. In contrast, utilities with a reservoir or stored water supply can continue operating by drawing from stored reserves while addressing the issue.

Mr. Johnson cited the City of Atlanta's Bellwood Quarry reservoir as an example of emergency storage capacity. In the event of a disruption at Atlanta's Chattahoochee River intake, the city could rely on stored water reserves to maintain supply for a period of time while repairs or mitigation measures are implemented.

Vice-Chair Jones also asked whether transferring water between river basins would be restricted due to watershed boundaries.

Mr. Johnson asked for clarification regarding where the Authority's wastewater ultimately flows. After it was confirmed that wastewater is treated through Fulton County's wastewater treatment system and ultimately returned to the Chattahoochee River, Mr. Johnson explained that this configuration generally aligns with watershed management practices.

Vice-Chair Jones then asked whether future connections with other jurisdictions could create concerns related to interbasin water transfers.

Mr. Johnson explained that such situations are reviewed and regulated by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD). He noted that interbasin transfers are evaluated based on their impact on downstream water flow requirements. For example, water flows into Lake Seminole at the Georgia-Florida border, where minimum flow levels must be maintained as part of interstate water management agreements. These flows are measured in cubic feet per second (CFS) and include water released from Lake Lanier along the Chattahoochee River as well as natural flow from the Flint River Basin.

Mr. Johnson noted that when water withdrawn from one basin is ultimately returned through wastewater discharge into another basin within the same regional system, the net impact may be limited. He explained that similar conditions already occur in parts of the region due to geographic watershed boundaries and development patterns. However, he emphasized that EPD ultimately determines whether such transfers are permissible and evaluates the specific volume of water involved.

Mr. Danny Johnson emphasized the importance of the Authority maintaining its existing water withdrawal permit from the Chattahoochee River, noting that such permits are extremely valuable regional assets. He advised that the Authority should make every effort to retain the permit, even if the infrastructure needed to fully utilize the withdrawal capacity has not yet been constructed.

Mr. Johnson explained that the permit could potentially support future regional partnerships or infrastructure collaborations if the Authority were to explore joint water supply solutions with neighboring jurisdictions. He noted that water supply discussions and infrastructure planning typically occur over long time horizons, and maintaining the permit preserves potential opportunities for future development.

He further stated that infrastructure costs continue to increase over time, and projects estimated decades ago are significantly more expensive today. As a result, he encouraged the Authority to remain mindful of long-term planning and investment considerations when evaluating future water infrastructure projects.

Mayor Hattie Portis-Jones asked Mr. Johnson to provide additional information regarding Coweta County's water supply project, including what communities may benefit from the project, potential expansion, and how the project is being financed.

Project Manager Laura Benz responded by explaining that Coweta County is developing a withdrawal system from the Chattahoochee River with an estimated capacity of approximately 27 million gallons per day. The primary purpose of the project is to strengthen the reliability of the county's existing water supply, particularly by helping to maintain water levels in the B.T. Brown Reservoir during drought conditions.

Ms. Benz explained that the project involves pumping water from the Chattahoochee River across Coweta County to replenish the reservoir, which is located near the northern portion of the county close to the Fulton County line. She noted that the pipeline infrastructure is expected to extend approximately five miles to connect the river withdrawal location to the reservoir.

Ms. Benz stated that the project is designed primarily to support Coweta County's own projected water supply needs and is not currently intended as a multi-jurisdictional water supply system. She noted that Coweta County maintains some existing agreements to purchase water from other jurisdictions, including the City of Griffin, and that Newnan Utilities operates additional reservoirs within the county to support local water supply needs.

She further noted that while the current project is focused on Coweta County's internal water supply planning, additional regional projects and development proposals such as those related to large-scale facilities requiring water resources may influence future water supply planning considerations.

Chairman Tony Phillips asked Mr. Danny Johnson, hypothetically, how he would advise regional stakeholders to begin discussions if all jurisdictions shown on the regional map were brought together to consider potential collaboration.

Mr. Johnson explained that the role of the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is primarily to convene and facilitate conversations among stakeholders, rather than direct specific decisions. He suggested that regional partners should begin by identifying the project as a regional infrastructure priority and raising awareness among federal and state representatives, particularly in discussions related to infrastructure funding opportunities.

Mr. Johnson noted that potential funding avenues could include congressionally directed spending or other large-scale infrastructure initiatives at the federal or state level. He encouraged local governments to continue raising the

issue in discussions with organizations such as the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA), state legislators, and regional partners to ensure the project remains visible should future funding opportunities arise.

He further explained that water infrastructure projects are typically financed through long-term debt, bonds, and water utility revenues, often supported by development-related fees when growth occurs. Mr. Johnson noted that communities must evaluate whether infrastructure investments are driven primarily by growth or by the need to build resilience and maintain reliable water systems.

Mr. Johnson also emphasized that water infrastructure systems age over time, and utilities must eventually reinvest in the replacement of pipelines and other components. He noted that many existing pipelines were originally installed by developers during periods of growth, but future replacements will typically be financed by utility ratepayers. As a result, communities must consider the long-term lifecycle of their infrastructure and plan accordingly.

Chairman Phillips acknowledged that discussions about water rate increases are often challenging for elected officials and communities; however, he noted that maintaining aging infrastructure and developing future solutions will likely require increased investment over time. He stated that current water costs are unlikely to remain the same in the future and emphasized the need for realistic conversations about long-term infrastructure funding.

Chairman Phillips also noted that many of the assumptions that existed when the Authority was originally established have changed significantly over time. As a result, he emphasized that future solutions will likely need to reflect new regional realities and evolving infrastructure needs.

He further stated that exploring regional collaboration may be an important part of identifying long-term solutions, as multiple jurisdictions across the region could potentially benefit from improved water infrastructure. Chairman Phillips concluded by noting that regional cooperation should be considered as the Authority continues planning for long-term water supply needs over the next several decades.

Mr. Danny Johnson stated that, if he were considering regional water supply from a long-term planning perspective, expanding access to the Chattahoochee River could significantly strengthen water supply reliability across multiple southern Metro Atlanta counties. He suggested that extending infrastructure from the Chattahoochee River could potentially provide a more resilient water source for jurisdictions such as Henry County, Clayton County, and Fayette County, ensuring greater reliability during periods of severe drought.

Mr. Johnson noted that such a large-scale regional infrastructure project could potentially attract greater interest and support at the federal level, particularly if pursued as part of a broader regional water supply initiative.

Chairman Tony Phillips agreed that projects of this scale could generate greater attention and potential funding opportunities through programs such as congressionally directed spending, particularly when framed as a regional infrastructure investment.

Mayor Hattie Portis-Jones asked why jurisdictions such as Clayton County would be interested in such a project given that the Flint River currently serves as a primary water source for that area.

Mr. Johnson explained that while Clayton County does rely on water sources connected to the Flint River Basin, those supplies are still heavily dependent on local rainfall and smaller watershed systems. In the event of a severe drought, these systems could become more vulnerable compared to larger river systems such as the Chattahoochee. He also noted that Clayton County has implemented a water reuse system, in which treated wastewater is routed through constructed wetlands and returned to a reservoir, creating a form of sustainable water recycling that helps

strengthen drought resilience. However, he noted that additional regional infrastructure connections could further enhance long-term reliability.

Mayor Portis-Jones then raised concerns regarding water affordability and access, noting that significant infrastructure investments could lead to substantial increases in water rates for residents. She stated that increasing rates alone may not be a sustainable solution for covering the full cost of major infrastructure projects.

Mayor Portis-Jones asked whether the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) or other agencies at the state or federal level are currently engaged in discussions related to water affordability and long-term funding strategies. She also asked which organizations or stakeholders local governments should engage with to explore alternative funding solutions that could support infrastructure improvements without placing excessive financial burdens on ratepayers.

Mr. Danny Johnson addressed the topic of water affordability and funding for infrastructure improvements, noting that while external funding opportunities may occasionally become available, most water infrastructure projects are ultimately supported by utility ratepayers. He acknowledged that affordability remains a significant concern across many communities and stated that discussions around balancing infrastructure investment and affordability are ongoing.

Mr. Johnson referenced DeKalb County's recent rate structure changes, which include a phased 10% annual rate increase over a ten-year period to support major water system improvements. He noted that DeKalb County incorporated an affordability component into the plan, establishing income-based thresholds to protect residents with limited financial resources by capping the amount of increase they would experience.

He explained that many utilities are exploring creative strategies to address affordability, including phased rate increases and assistance programs, while still ensuring that utilities can cover rising operational costs such as chemicals, treatment, energy, infrastructure maintenance, and workforce expenses.

Mayor Hattie Portis-Jones stated that while rate adjustments may be necessary, communities have historically become accustomed to very low water rates, which could make significant increases difficult for residents. She emphasized the importance of implementing affordability mechanisms alongside rate adjustments and noted that conversations about water access and affordability should occur at all levels of government.

Mr. Johnson also noted that the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District's 2022 Water Resources Management Plan includes action items encouraging utilities to adopt customer assistance policies. These policies help address situations such as unexpected water leaks or plumbing failures that may cause unusually high-water bills. Under such programs, utilities may provide one-time adjustments or relief measures to help customers manage unexpected charges.

Chairman Tony Phillips stated that any long-term infrastructure funding strategy will likely require multiple funding components, including ratepayer contributions as well as potential external funding sources. He emphasized that even with alternative funding strategies, the cost of producing and delivering water will likely increase over time. Chairman Phillips noted that communities must begin having realistic conversations about future water costs while also considering affordability and funding alternatives.

Mr. Johnson added that some utilities choose to maintain consistent annual rate adjustments tied to inflation or the Consumer Price Index, which helps utilities remain financially stable while avoiding large rate increases after long periods of inactivity. He noted that many utilities across the region implement planned annual rate increases, often ranging between two and four percent, as part of long-term financial planning.

City Manager Sylvia Redic asked whether municipalities have an option to exit the water utility business if they determine they can no longer sustain the financial responsibility associated with operating a water system.

Mr. Johnson explained that water utilities are considered essential public services and must maintain compliance with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) water quality standards. If a system fails to meet regulatory requirements, state authorities may intervene to ensure safe drinking water services are maintained. He noted that while such situations are rare in Georgia, maintaining strong infrastructure and financial planning is essential to ensure continued compliance and reliable service.

V. Reports:

1. Water Attorney Report-

Attorney Dennis Davenport provided an update regarding matters previously discussed during the last meeting. He noted that the Authority had reviewed a memorandum addressing financial contributions from the member cities, during which several questions were raised, and several items were approved by the board.

Attorney Davenport stated that one of the items previously agreed upon was that each member city would designate a primary point of contact, in addition to the mayor, to assist with communications related to the Authority. The designated contact would provide both telephone and email information, and members of each city's council would also be included as part of the communication group. The purpose of this arrangement is to ensure that all parties remain informed regarding monthly water consumption and financial obligations.

He explained that maintaining regular communication will allow the Authority to track water usage on a monthly basis and review consumption trends over a six-month period. This process will allow the Authority to adjust payments based on actual water consumption and ensure that each city understands its monthly financial responsibilities and payment schedule.

Attorney Davenport noted that two outstanding items remained from the previous discussion. One of the primary issues involved determining when monthly water consumption data from each member city would be provided to the Authority.

He stated that he has been working with City Manager Sylvia Redic, who recently provided two reports to assist with this process. One report from Coweta County reflected water usage from mid-November to mid-December, while another report from the water treatment plant provided daily production data from December 1 through December 31. These reports allow the board to analyze the data and determine 30-day consumption totals, which can then be used to adjust financial obligations during each six-month review cycle.

Attorney Davenport explained that the goal is to establish a consistent reporting schedule so that each city provides the same information at the same time each month. He asked the board whether the 15th of each month would be an appropriate date for submitting the required consumption reports.

Chairman Tony Phillips stated that the City of Fairburn would be able to provide the information by the 15th of the month.

Mayor Vince Williams indicated that the City of Union City would also be able to meet the proposed 15th deadline.

City Manager Sylvia Redic noted that the feasibility of the date would depend on when the city receives its billing information and stated that she would need to confirm the billing schedule.

Attorney Davenport explained that because the Authority receives two different reporting cycles, one from the external water provider covering mid-month to mid-month and another from the water treatment plant, covering the first through the last day of the month two reports may need to be submitted in order to align the data for the same 30-day period. For example, if the external provider report covers mid-November through mid-December, the Authority may also need to review November production data from the treatment plant to ensure the reporting periods match.

He noted that this process may result in the reporting data being approximately two weeks behind, but it will ensure that the Authority accurately captures 30-day consumption totals. After reviewing six consecutive 30-day cycles, the Authority will be able to adjust financial contributions accordingly.

Attorney Davenport recommended that the Authority test the proposed reporting date of the 15th of each month, noting that the date can be adjusted in the future if needed. He requested that the board formally vote to adopt this reporting schedule as part of the Authority's policy, consistent with the other items previously approved.

A motion to establish the 15th of each month as the submission date for documentation was made by Mayor Vince Williams and seconded by City Manager Jamila Criss.

Vote: 7-0; Motion Carried

Attorney Dennis Davenport informed the board that once all required votes on the policy items are completed, he will prepare a formal resolution to present at the next meeting. The resolution will include all agreed-upon components and clearly outline the Authority's monthly reporting and payment policies.

Mayor Hattie Portis-Jones asked for clarification regarding the proposed 15th of the month reporting date, noting that the board had discussed implementing the date on a trial basis. She asked how long the trial period would last before determining whether the date is effective.

Attorney Davenport responded that the timeline would ultimately be determined by the board. He explained that he plans to return at the March meeting with the draft resolution, and if any member city experiences difficulty meeting the proposed reporting deadline, that concern should be raised at that time.

Mayor Portis-Jones asked whether the board would continue using the date unless an issue was raised.

Attorney Davenport confirmed that the intention is to establish a standard reporting process that works for all member cities, and the board can revisit the schedule if any city encounters difficulties.

Attorney Davenport then addressed the final outstanding item related to payment schedules. He noted that the Authority has not previously established a specific date by which member cities must submit payments. He recommended that payments be due no later than the first day of the following calendar month.

For example, he explained that if a city's water usage invoice covers the month of February, the payment would be due no later than March 1st. He noted that cities may submit payments earlier if they choose, but the first day of the following month would serve as the minimum payment deadline.

City Manager Sylvia Redic asked whether cities would receive a specific amount to pay or if they would need to calculate the amount themselves.

Attorney Davenport clarified that invoice amounts are determined every six months, and cities will be informed of the amount they are expected to pay during that period. The purpose of establishing a clear due date is to eliminate confusion regarding payment expectations and ensure that all cities understand their minimum payment obligations.

Attorney Davenport noted that the proposed reporting and payment procedures, along with the other previously approved policy items, will all be included in the formal resolution he intends to present at the next meeting once the board completes its remaining vote.

A motion to implement the payment remittance deadline of the first day of the following month was made by City Manager Sylvia Redic and seconded by Vice-Chair Brian Jones. **Vote: 7-0; Motion Carried**

City Manager Jamila Criss asked for clarification regarding when the new reporting process should begin. She inquired whether the member cities should begin submitting information starting March 1st, or if they should go back and submit information from prior months in order to catch up.

Attorney Davenport explained that the new reporting process will officially take effect on March 1, with all member cities following the agreed-upon procedures for submitting monthly usage information. However, in order to ensure the Authority is properly prepared for the upcoming April 2026 billing adjustment period, he requested that cities provide previous usage information beginning with November, December, and January so that records can be brought up to date.

Attorney Davenport noted that once the historical data is submitted, the Authority will then move forward with the regular monthly reporting cycle, with each city submitting its water usage information every 30 days.

Attorney Davenport also informed the board that he intends to provide monthly financial updates, which he referred to as a “report card,” outlining the financial standing of each member city. He explained that the report begins with the ending balances as of December 31st, 2025, and includes each city’s invoice amount for January 2026, as well as deposits received during that month.

He stated that the report shows the balance after the January deposits for each member city, noting that all cities currently maintain positive balances.

Attorney Davenport further explained that the February invoice amounts were also reflected in the report. He noted that the City of Fairburn submitted its February payment on February 4th in the amount of \$85,000, which placed the city ahead of its required payment schedule.

He then reviewed the payment status of each city. For example, he stated that Union City’s typical payment amount is \$142,000, but due to its current balance, the city would only need to submit \$107,000 to remain current, with payment due no later than March 1st.

Attorney Davenport also noted that Fairburn and Palmetto currently have sufficient balances, and therefore would not be required to make additional payments until April 1st, unless they choose to submit payments earlier.

Attorney Davenport reminded the board that at the previous meeting he committed to providing a list of duties currently performed by Post & Associates. He explained that this list was distributed to the board members to serve as a reference for developing a scope of services.

Attorney Davenport noted that the purpose of the document is to help the Authority identify and define the services required from a future vendor should the Authority move forward with procuring professional services for those responsibilities.

He asked the board to confirm that members had received the list of duties, which can be used as a foundation for drafting the scope of work for a potential request for proposals (RFP) or similar procurement process to identify the Authority's next service provider.

2. Financial Manager

Attorney Davenport presented Requisition #287 in the amount of \$12,135.79.

The motion to approve requisition #287 was made by Mayor Williams and seconded by Vice-Chair Jones.

Vote: 7-0; Motion Carried

Attorney Davenport presented Requisition #288 in the amount of \$17,590.00.

The motion to approve requisition #288 was made by Vice Chair Jones and seconded by Mayor Williams.

Vote: 7-0; Motion Carried

3. Project Managers:

The Project Managers informed the board of an update regarding the Authority's effort to collaborate with Georgia Tech's case program, noting that the outcome was unfortunately not as expected.

The Project Managers explained that during the December meeting, the board agreed to explore opportunities with Georgia Tech to assist with several potential project scopes. At that time, Mayor Smith provided a contact at Georgia Tech, Valerie, who was responsible for coordinating the case program.

Following the board's direction, the project managers contacted Valerie and held a video conference meeting to learn more about the program and its submission deadlines. Information from that discussion was reported back to the board during the December meeting, and the board agreed to proceed with submitting proposed project scopes.

The Project Managers stated that four project scopes were prepared and shared with Valerie. After several revisions and communications, the scopes were presented to the board at the January meeting, where they were formally approved. The approved scopes were then submitted to Georgia Tech shortly afterward.

The Project Managers reported that on January 27, Valerie responded indicating that she was in the process of recruiting students and that the Authority would likely hear from the student teams within approximately one week. However, after several weeks without additional communication, they followed up and received an automatic email response stating that Valerie was out of the office until April and providing an alternate contact.

The project managers then contacted Valerie's supervisor, who indicated that Georgia Tech had decided not to operate the case program during the spring semester, with plans to resume the program in the fall semester instead. The supervisor stated that this decision had been made earlier and that the program was currently paused.

The Project Managers noted that this information was unexpected given the previous communications indicating that the Authority's project scopes were being prepared for the spring program.

They further explained that the Dean of the program later contacted them directly to apologize for the confusion. According to the Dean, the staff member who had been communicating with the Authority had been on leave and did not have the authority to formally approve project scopes or confirm participation in the program. The university is currently reviewing the situation internally to determine whether other organizations may have been similarly affected.

The Project Managers stated that Georgia Tech confirmed the case program will resume in the fall, following efforts to reorganize and strengthen the program. They explained that the program had experienced significant growth—

from approximately 10 participating organizations in its first year to over 600 students in the following year—and that the university decided to pause the program temporarily to improve staffing and program management.

The Project Managers concluded by noting that the situation was disappointing given the time and effort invested by the Authority, but they anticipate the opportunity to revisit participation in the program once it resumes in the fall.

Chairman Tony Phillips asked, based on the conversation the Project Managers had with the program's Dean, whether there was still a viable opportunity for the Authority to participate in the Georgia Tech case program when it resumes in the fall.

The Project Managers responded that, based on their conversation with the Dean, the program is expected to resume in the fall semester after Georgia Tech completes its internal restructuring and staffing adjustments. They indicated that the university intends to strengthen the program before relaunching it.

In the meantime, the Project Managers noted that there may be alternative resources and tools available to assist the Authority with some of the analytical work that had originally been planned through the Georgia Tech partnership.

They explained that the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) has recently released a statewide water rate analysis platform. While the platform is complex, it provides access to water rate data from utilities across the State of Georgia, which could serve as a useful reference point for evaluating the Authority's current rate structure.

The Project Managers noted that although the GEFA platform reflects current water rates rather than future projections, it still offers valuable benchmarking information that could support the Authority's planning efforts.

They plan to review additional resources and opportunities that could help advance the Authority's objectives while the Georgia Tech program is on hold. The Project Managers indicated that they will explore these options and plan to return at the March meeting with potential alternatives for the board's consideration.

VI. Other Business

VII. Adjournment

The motion to adjourn the Middle Chattahoochee Regional Water & Sewer Authority Meeting at 8:23 p.m. was made by Mayor Williams and seconded by Mayor Portis-Jones. **Vote: 7-0; Motion Carried**