

UTILITY ADVISORY BOARD
Thursday, September 17, 2026
8:30 – 10:00 am
AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes – July 16, 2026
2. Public Comments on Agenda Items
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Updates
 - a. Water/Sewer Report (July/August) – McCaul
 - b. Circuit Breaker, City Manager (Verbrugge)
5. Lead and Copper Rule update (Fisher)
6. Water System Manager (Fisher)
7. Public Comments
8. Items from Members
9. Next Meeting – October 15, 2026
10. Adjournment

UTILITY ADVISORY BOARD
Thursday, July 16, 2026
MINUTES

Members Present

Mike DeVries, Samarhia Giffel, Wayne Jernberg, Jim Kirkwood, Jeff McCaul, Lindsay Sagorski Munsell, Chad Reul, and Tai Verbrugge

Alternates Present

Alan Avitia, Todd Boerman, Scott Connors, Wayne Harrall, and Andrew Meyer

Others Present

Carly Aller

Call to Order

Mr. Jernberg called the meeting to order at 8:32 am.

Approval of Minutes – June 18, 2026

Motion to approve the minutes made by Mr. DeVries and seconded by Ms. Giffel.

MOTION CARRIED.

Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no public comments.

Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda made by Mr. Connors and seconded by Mr. Reul.

Amendment made by Mr. DeVries to add discussion item regarding frequency of UAB meetings, to be discussed after Legal Services item.

MOTION CARRIED.

Legal Services – Presented by Mr. Jernberg

Summary

- Attorney Jessica Wood submitted a letter notifying the city that she has moved from Dickinson-Wright to Bloom Sluggett.
- She presented an option to the Grand Valley Regional Biosolids Authority to authorize transferring legal files to Bloom Sluggett to allow her to continue providing legal counsel, which the board has tentatively approved.

Board Discussion

- Mr. Connors
 - Expressed full confidence in her ability based on past performance.
- Mr. Jernberg
 - Reported that Dickinson Wright's municipal support division is diminishing, though they will likely remain bond counsel.
 - Cited past instances regarding potential conflict of interest concerns involving Waler and Brownfield issues, noted Jessica clarified Bloom Sluggett's ability to provide separate attorneys if conflicts arise.
 - Does not anticipate conflicts affecting UAB or GVRBA.
- Mr. Devries
 - Commented that the city hires law firms but often relies on specific attorneys.
 - Agrees the UAB should follow Jessica Wood, given longstanding reliance on her expertise and solid performance.
 - Stated that most contentious items have already been resolved historically and current needs are minor.
- Ms. Sagorski: Asked whether legal contracts run through the city or UAB.
 - Mr. Verbrugge: Could not recall seeing UAB legal invoices except for bond counsel.
 - Mr. Jernberg: Believes the contract and invoices for Ottawa county related work are purchased through the city. Recommended checking with Accounts Payable.

Motion to approve transferring UAB legal services to Bloom Sluggett made by Mr. Kirkwood, supported by Mr. DeVries.

MOTION CARRIED.

UAB Meeting Schedule – Presented by Mr. Devries

Summary

- Recent meetings have been short. Suggestion raised to reduce meeting frequency to every other month, except when significant items arise.

Board Discussion

- Mr. Jernberg
 - Discussed the idea earlier with Mr. Devries, considered cancelling July's meeting but kept it due to the legal services vote.
 - Proposed developing a milestone-based meeting schedule, covering key events such as:
 - Annual budget review
 - Rate study deadlines
 - Quarterly meeting requirement compliance
- Mr. Connors

- Suggested that off-months could be used for subcommittee work if needed.
- Mr. Verbrugge
 - Noted the requirement for UAB to meet once per quarter, meaning thoughtful spacing is required. A preliminary financial review for the fiscal year that just ended could be postponed until September due to data availability.
- Mr. Jernberg
 - No significant items anticipated for August.
 - Agreement reached to cancel the August meeting and reconvene in September.

Updates

- Water/Sewer Report (June) – Presented by Mr. McCaul
 - Contract Increase for Relief Valve Installation
 - Added a 12-inch relief valve to an existing contract.
 - Original project was under estimate, allowing this addition.
 - One of nine projects scheduled; closing at end of August.
 - Approximately \$90,000 under original estimate.
 - Cold Storage Building (WRRF)
 - End-of-life siding and roof replacement.
 - Low bid: \$112,000, significantly under engineering estimate of \$182,000.
 - Materials Lead Time Discussion
 - Mr. Harrell: Asked if water main lead time issues persist, coordination delays with Ottawa County noted.
 - Mr. McCaul: Most materials available in 4–6 weeks, issues stem more from contractor capacity.
 - Mr. Jernberg: No current issues with zinc-coated pipe, larger valves may pose challenges.
 - Mr. McCaul: Larger valves often have long lead times.
 - Mr. Jernberg: Reported a project requiring emergency water support was delayed three months due to ball valve shortages.
- DWRF Funding Update – Presented by Mr. Jernberg
 - State Funding Summary
 - Draft DWRF priority list released.
 - First year separating water capital budget and DWRF program.
 - City qualified for a \$9 million loan with a 10% grant component dedicated to lead service line replacement.
 - Capital Strategy
 - City pursuing a hybrid budgeting approach:
 - Maintain DWRF for lead service line projects.
 - Preserve senior bonds for major projects.

- Some projects may start ahead of bond issuance, with city reimbursing itself.
- Lead Service Line Program
 - New EGLE scoring drastically reshuffled priority lists, many small financially strained communities are receiving high rankings.
 - Detroit received only ~50% of requested funding.
 - Grand Rapids is ~35–40% complete with lead service line replacements.
 - Target replacement rate: 1900 feet/year, current rate 1700–1800 feet/year.
 - Estimated under 16,000 feet remaining.
 - Projected completion around 2035.
- Additional Notes
 - Possible federal scoring revisions may increase strictness but should not significantly impact the city.
 - Discussion regarding bottled water royalty fees, AWWA still evaluating policy direction.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Items from Members

- Mr. Boerman: Reported that Alison Nugent is leaving Caledonia and relocating to Texas.
- Ms. Sagorski: Reported heat-driven demand triggered Consumers Energy’s demand response program for load shedding off the system. First time in 5 years.
- Mr. Kirkwood: Noted temperature dropped slightly by 7 degrees today.
- Mr. Harrall: GR Township has initiated ozone action days and posted “clean air” signage.
- Mr. Connors: Walker adjusted public works operations due to heat to keep employees inside as much as possible.
- Ms. Giffel:
 - Attended national AWWA conference, city of GR received an award for Lead Service Line program and community engagement.
 - Shared that 28 participating states discussed revolving funds, many systems had not previously applied.
 - Mentioned MDHHS program providing interior plumbing assistance funding (\$9,000 per home).
 - Emphasized importance of collaboration and potential future impacts of bottled water taxation on infrastructure funding.
- Mr. Jernberg: Award recognition will be presented at City Commission in October, aligned with Lead Prevention & Awareness Week. Planned involvement of multiple departments (Water, ESD, Code Compliance).

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for September 17, 2026.

Reminder August 16, 2026 meeting was cancelled.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 am.

Water/Sewer UAB Report

July 2026

Project Name	Contractor	Award Date	Substantial Completion Date	Final Completion Date	Water Fund Authorized NTE Amt	Sewer Fund Authorized NTE Amt	Est. Year for Rates	Integrated (Y/N)
Reconstruction of JEFFERSON AVENUE from Martin Luther King Jr. Street to Logan Street	C L Trucking & Excavating, LLC	6/8/2026	10/22/2027	11/5/2027	\$1,618,660.00	N/A	2027	N (GR)
Improvements to ORCHARD VISTA and ALPINE ESTATES SANITARY LIFT STATIONS	L D Docsa & Associates, Inc. dba L D Docsa Associates, Inc.	7/21/2026	10/1/2027	12/1/2027	N/A	\$1,783,185.00	2027	N (CAS, GRT)
Replacement of Private Lead Service Lines at VARIOUS LOCATIONS 2025-3	BRIK Plumbing LLC	10/7/2025	6/1/2027	6/30/2027	\$1,348,000.00	N/A	2027	N (GR)
Replacement of Private Lead Service Lines at VARIOUS LOCATIONS 2025-4	Groundhawg Excavating & Landscaping LLC	10/21/2025	6/1/2027	6/30/2027	\$1,214,000.00	N/A	2027	N (GR)

August 2026

Water Main Extension in IRENE AVENUE, LINDA AVENUE and PUBLIC EASEMENT (SE) and Water Services in BURTON STREET (Irene-Linda Water Main Extension)	CL Trucking & Excavating, LLC	8/25/2026	7/2/2027	5/8/2028	\$1,724,980.00	N/A	2027	N (Cascade)
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