

Hart County Water and Sewer Authority Board of Directors Meeting January 12, 2026

The Hart County Water and Sewer Authority met on January 12, 2026, in the Hart County Cooperative Extension Service Building. Chairman Wade Carlton called the meeting to order. Present were Board Members Patti York, Larry Haley, Marvin Justice and Bennie Harper. Also present were Legal Counsel Kim Higginbotham, Director Pat Goran, Office Manager Karen Neal, Hartwell Sun Editor Rose Scoggins and many local residents.

Welcome

Approval of Agenda

Ms. York made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Justice requested the UGA Archway discussion be moved up on the agenda from 7d to 7a. Mr. Harper seconded the motion as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of December 15, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

Mr. Haley made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2025 Board meeting. Mr. Harper seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments

Local resident Nancy Feranchek asked when the Reed Creek Highway project would begin. Mr. Goran stated it should be late January.

Financial Report

Mr. Goran stated nothing has changed with SPLOST funds. He further stated that HCWSA funds are relatively unchanged as well but did note that some SPLOST reimbursement funds were outstanding as of today. Mr. Goran shared that flushing usage is down a fair amount due to cooler temperatures. Additionally, Mr. Goran pointed out that almost no water needed to be flushed on Smith McGee Highway since Hartwell was applying a high amount of powdered activated carbon at their treatment plant due to ongoing taste and odor issues. Mr. Goran stated the Lavonia gallons purchased were higher, so HCWSA does not have to buy as much water from Hartwell. Finally, Mr. Goran led the Board through a brief review of the profit and loss statement for the prior month pointing out specific line items and answering questions on others. That led into a discussion of generators and their maintenance. Mr. Carlton asked Mr. Goran to obtain quotes for generator maintenance contracts.

Old Business

University of Georgia Archway study for constructing new surface water treatment plant

Mr. Justice asked for clarification on the students and the project. He stated that should HCWSA move forward with building its own treatment facility. He further stated he would like to see this process move quickly to save as much money as possible.

Reed Creek area expansion project update and discussion of how to prioritize requests for service outside current project scope

Mr. Goran noted continued delays on Union Hill Church Road due to an upcoming GDOT bridge replacement led to the contractor being moved to Curt Bailey Road to begin that project. The Curt Bailey project is complete except for the pressure and bacteriological testing. The contractor has moved back to Union Hill Church Road and is installing pipe from the opposite end to keep them working until a decision is made on how to cross the stream.

Mr. Goran stated that he asked EMI to apply for a second GEFA loan by completing the pre-application process. Mr. Goran noted it would be a couple of months before we know if that request is approved by GEFA. Mr. Goran further stated he directed EMI to request the maximum amount of \$10,000,000 and emphasized that if the loan is approved, HCWSA is not required to accept any or all of this money. Finally, Mr. Goran stated that even if approved, there will likely be a waiting period to learn how much principal forgiveness, if any, is awarded. Mr. Carlton noted we would need significant principal forgiveness for a loan that size.

A local resident asked when the Board would prioritize which additional roads would be included in the Reed Creek Highway project. Mr. Carlton stated that no one should expect that to happen before construction reaches the intersection of Reed Creek Highway and Reed Creek School Road.

Consideration of partnering with City of Lavonia – surface water treatment plant

Mr. Goran stated he is not aware where the City of Lavonia is currently on updating their current facility or building a new facility. Mr. Goran noted that Robert Ogburn has replaced Charles Cawthon as City Manager although Mr. Cawthon will remain as an advisor for a short period. Mr. Carlton suggested Mr. Goran keep the lines of communication open with Mr. Cawthon and Mr. Ogburn by meeting periodically with them to stay in the loop on their plans and continue to discuss a potential partnership.

Discussion of Authority's wholesale water purchase arrangement with Hartwell

Discussion was held regarding the appropriate way for representatives of the Authority to contact their counterparts with the City of Hartwell.

Mr. Haley recommended that HCWSA move forward with the previously approved well drilling like Franklin County. Ms. Higginbotham asked Mr. Goran if any of the places identified have agreed to commit to selling water to Hart County. Mr. Goran stated that this has been put off to the side because of other projects going on. Mr. Goran stated none of the property owners are interested in selling land but would rather receive a price per thousand gallons like Franklin County offers its well owners.

New Business - none

Director's Comments

Mr. Goran reminded Ms. York, Mr. Justice and Mr. Harper their terms come to a close at the end of February. He noted they should complete an application and submit it to the Board of Commissioners if they want to remain on the Board.

Members' Comments

Ms. York and Mr. Harper had no additional comments. Mr. Haley stated that HCWSA needs to stop flushing so much water. Mr. Goran stated there is not a great deal of flushing that goes on. Mr. Haley then stated HCWSA should consider looping some lines to avoid the need to flush lines at all or as much. Mr. Goran stated he can have EMI study this but warned the construction cost would be several hundred thousand dollars. Mr. Carlton asked Mr. Goran to see what options are available to HCWSA. Mr. Justice stated that he feels additional employees are needed given the increased workload and to avoid delays if Mr. Goran or Ms. Neal must be out for an extended period. Mr. Carlton agreed that additional employees are needed for cross training as well. Ms. Higginbotham asked Mr. Goran to provide a job description. Mr. Goran stated office space is limited and noted a larger office may be needed if additional employees are hired. Mr. Carlton suggested a full-time employee working with Mr. Goran and a part-time employee assisting in the office a few days a week would be a good start.

Upcoming Meetings

Mr. Carlton asked if anyone had any conflicts with February 16th or March 16th for the next two meetings. No conflicts were noted.

Adjournment

Mr. Harper made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Haley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Wade Carlton, Chairman