

Hart County Water and Sewer Authority

Board of Directors Meeting February 16, 2026

The Hart County Water and Sewer Authority met on February 16, 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. Haley seconded the motion as amended. The motion passed 4-0. Mr. Justice was not present.

Approval of January 12, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes

Mr. Haley made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 12, 2026 Board meeting. Mr. Harper seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments

Mr. Justice arrived during this part of the meeting. Wanda Barnett and other residents of the Moreland Heights neighborhood expressed an interest in being added to the Reed Creek Highway project now underway. Mr. Alan Brown expressed continued interest of the residents of the Hidden Point neighborhood in being added to the Reed Creek Highway project. Mr. Guy Hagan also expressed continued interest of the residents of the Sentu Way neighborhood in being added to the Reed Creek Highway project. Nancy Ferencak of the Raindrop/Dewdrop Circle neighborhood thanked the Board for the progress being made on the Reed Creek Highway project.

Financial Report

Mr. Goran stated nothing has changed with SPLOST funds. He further stated that HCWSA funds are down slightly due to outstanding SPLOST reimbursements. Mr. Goran shared that flushing usage is down again due to cooler temperatures. In response to a question raised by Mr. Haley in the last meeting, Mr. Goran mentioned he had discussed with EMI the benefit of possibly installing chlorine injection systems, and EMI responded this would ultimately raise the disinfection byproducts in the water which would result in the need to flush even more water than we currently are. Mr. Goran stated that HCWSA probably flushes less water per month to maintain chlorine residuals compared to other similar rural systems. Finally, Mr. Goran led the Board through a review of the profit and loss statement for the month of January. Mr. Goran noted that recent large leaks lead to some expensive repairs and the Authority would likely need to increase the budget for leak repairs in future years.

Old Business

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

Mr. Goran noted that Ms. York, Mr. Justice and he recently participated in an update meeting with the UGA Archway students working on this project to discuss their progress and next steps. Mr. Goran expects a finalized plan in May.

Reed Creek area expansion project update

Mr. Goran shared the project has finally begun and Arrowood General Contracting is making good progress. Mr. Goran stated that, unless the Board feels differently, construction would continue to the Raindrop/Dewdrop Circles neighborhood before moving on to Reed Creek School Road and Old Andersonville Road ending at the Cliff Road / Friendship Drive / Lamb Road area. Mr. Goran reminded the Board the Authority has applied for another loan, but HCWSA has not received word as yet how much the loan would be for or how much principal forgiveness is likely to be offered. Mr. Justice requested a ride along with Mr. Goran so he could lay eyes on the project route as well as the roads that have requested to be included in this project. Mr. Carlton asked Board Members to review the estimates and maps they have been provided and be prepared to discuss next month.

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

Mr. Carlton requested Mr. Goran tell Lavonia City Manager Robert Ogburn the Authority continues to be very interested in a partnership going forward. After a brief discussion, Mr. Goran shared the primary problem is Lavonia and/or Royston finding qualified water treatment plant operators to be able to add a shift.

Discussion of Authority's wholesale water purchase arrangement with Hartwell

Mr. Goran shared there is no change as he has not been contacted in several months. After general discussion on next steps, Mr. Carlton asked Ms. York to reach out to the City Council Members. Ms. York asked Ms. Higginbotham to approve an email, and Ms. Higginbotham agreed to provide guidance.

New Business

Request for water service – Elbert County poultry operations

Mr. Goran stated a poultry operation not far over the Elbert County line in southeastern Hart County reached out to him requesting the Board consider providing Authority water for twenty-seven poultry houses. Mr. Goran stated it is fairly close to the river. Mr. Goran shared that the requester said he had reached out to Elbert County officials who stated they would have no problem with the request. Mr. Goran stated he feels the Authority's primary responsibility is to provide water for the residents and businesses of Hart County. Ms. York inquired as to whether a potential new source of water is available in the area and Ms. Higginbotham replied it is unlikely. Mr. Carlton stated he is not in favor and asked the remaining Board Members to weigh in on the subject. Mr. Justice stated he was absolutely not interested. No other members had any comment.

Director's Comments

Mr. Goran's asked if Mr. Harper, Mr. Justice and Ms. York have turned in their applications to renew their appointments on HCWSA's Board. All three answered in the affirmative.

Mr. Goran also stated the small project on Union Hill Church Road has become a big problem due to GDOT plans to slightly shift the bridge alignment as well as acquire approximately 30' of additional right of way. GDOT has yet to require the right of way, which means the Authority would have to obtain easements from two residents, but Mr. Goran does not expect this to be a problem. Mr. Carlton asked if the shift in placement could possibly get the proposed HCWSA pipe away from the rock currently blocking it and Mr. Goran stated that is a possibility.

Mr. Goran stated the Curt Bailey Road project is now complete and water is on the line; however, it would be a couple of months before Ms. Do's farm is completed and ready for chickens.

Mr. Goran stated he had not yet obtained maintenance quotes for the generators because he needs contact information for the companies mentioned in the previous meeting. Mr. Carlton said he would share that information at the close of the meeting. Mr. Goran stated that he goes out monthly and checks the generators and operation of the automatic transfer switches by temporarily turning off utility power.

Members' Comments

Ms. York asked Mr. Goran if the Reed Creek Highway area has sufficient pressure and Mr. Goran answered affirmatively.

Neither Mr. Haley, Mr. Justice nor Mr. Harper had any further comments or questions.

Mr. Carlton reminded Board Members they need to be prepared to discuss which areas to add to the Reed Creek Highway project at the March meeting.

Upcoming Meetings

Mr. Carlton asked if anyone had any conflicts with March 16th or April 20th for the next two meetings. No conflicts were noted.

Adjournment

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

Wade Carlton, Chairman