

NORTHEAST PUBLIC WATER AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES  
February 19, 2026 at 1:30 PM

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**Call to Order:**

- President Jay Sabella called the meeting to order on February 19, 2026, at 1:31 PM.

**Roll Call:**

Jay Sabella, President, took roll call and members present were Matt Bennett via the phone, Sonia Boling via the phone, Kim Jones, Office Manager, Dylan Osmon and Linda McClellan. Also in attendance by proxy was Matt Stone, with his proxy given to Jay Sabella. A motion was made by Jay Sabella to nominate Dylan Osmon as interim secretary in the absence of Brett Cox, a second was provided by Linda McClellan and it passed unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes and Reports:**

- Approval of the minutes as distributed for January 2026. Linda McClellan made a motion to approve, seconded by Jay Sabella and approved by unanimous vote.
- Approval of the Office Report as distributed for January 2026. Linda McClellan made a motion to approve, seconded by Sonia Boling and approved by unanimous vote.
- Approval of the Treasurer's Report distributed for January 2026. Linda McClellan made a motion to approve, seconded by Dylan Osmon and approved by unanimous vote.
- Field Report distributed for January 2026 was Tabled due to absence of Rickey Lee, Field Manager.

**Old Business:**

- The first item of old business concerned a discussion of the sewer project idea. Kim Jones reported that a letter had been received from Blake Gary of Gary Law LLC, Little Rock, Arkansas. Mr. Gary provided guidance within the scope of his expertise and advised that the Board seek additional legal counsel regarding whether the water department may assist with or expend resources for purposes not expressly authorized under the current by-laws. Dylan Osmon wanted to make clear for the record that we have not received express consent from an attorney confirming approval of previous or future assignments given to the water office employees. In addition, the board has not received confirmation from any state representatives confirming approval, he agreed with Jay Sabella that we need to seek legal counsel before moving forward. Kim Jones recommended contacting Heartsill Ragon of Gill Ragon Owen, P.A., Little Rock, Arkansas, who has previously represented NPWA in by-law matters. The Board discussed engaging Mr. Ragon, or another qualified attorney if appropriate, to provide legal guidance regarding the water department's authority to assist with a sewer project and or the incorporation process of becoming a second-class city. The Board also discussed requesting legal review and recommendations concerning the current by-laws as they relate to the nomination and election of directors, as well as the removal process for directors. The Board expressed its intent to ensure that the nomination and election process is transparent and accessible to water customers who wish to serve as directors. The Board further discussed updating the existing by-laws to replace outdated provisions that may present unnecessary barriers for participation, and to clarify and modernize the procedures for removal of directors. A motion was made by Jay Sabella to retain legal counsel to advise the Board regarding potential by-law revisions related to the sewer assistance. The motion was seconded by Dylan Osmon, who included a budget limitation of \$1,000 for such services. The motion passed with affirmative votes from Jay Sabella, Dylan Osmon, Sonia Boling, Matt Bennett, and Matt Stone (by proxy), and one opposing vote from Linda McClellan. A second motion was made by Dylan Osmon, seconded by Jay Sabella, to engage legal counsel to advise the Board on the nomination, election, and removal processes for directors under the current by-laws. The motion passed unanimously.
- The next item of old business was regarding Future Mapping Options- information from Diamond Maps and information from Jay Sabella; however, it was tabled for the next month when Rickey Lee and Tony Lischeron could be present.
- The next item of old business was to review guidelines based on the AR FOIA in order to ensure mindfulness when communicating with the public, employees, or one another.
- The next item of old business was to review a recent County Road and Bridge Ordinance; however, it was tabled for the next month when Rickey Lee could be present.
- The next item of old business was Henry Porter for NE Lakeside Fire Dept for a fire hydrant; however, it was tabled for the next month when Rickey Lee could be present.
- The next item of old business was the Meter and Radio Replacement Program; however, it was tabled for the next month when the field manager could be present.

- The next item of old business was Backhoe Quotes for Repair and the possible purchase of a new backhoe; however, it was tabled for the next month when Rickey Lee could be present.
- The next item of old business was future Backflow Training opportunities; however, it was tabled for the following month, when more board members could be present.
- The next item of old business was the recent APEHR meeting. Kim stated she did not get to attend the meeting but plans to attend in April 2026.
- The next item of old business was to review or revise the current PTO Policy; however, it was tabled for next month when Rickey Lee and Tony Lischeron could be present.
- The last item of old business was to revisit the pay scale/raises. Jay Sabella made a motion for Kim Jones to record in the personnel policy how the water department currently conducts the compensation plan, Dylan Osmon provided a second, and it was approved by unanimous vote. Kim Jones asked if they could go into an Executive meeting at 2:26p.m. and the board returned to regular session at 2:49p.m. Jay Sabella stated the executive session involved managerial job costs, and whether to give raises and the need for NPWA to have a template for payroll going forward. Sonia Boling then stated that she is going to use the pay scale template created by Kim Jones, and she would create one that NPWA would adopt as their own.

### **New Business:**

- The first item of new business was to look at 2025 Audit Proposals. Kim Jones presented Audit proposals from two CPA Firms; however, this was tabled for next month with the board asking Kim Jones to ask Brian Hass, NPWA's current auditor, if he wanted to present a proposal for our 2025 audit, and to also search for a couple of more proposals to bring back to the board next month for a decision on who to hire. Kim Jones informed the board that the 2024 Audit, being processed by Brian Hass, is still incomplete.
- The second item of new business was for the Destruction of 2015 Records. This was not voted on and will have to be relooked at next month.
- The next item of new business was Notifications of new items or issues. Jay Sabella gave Matt Bennett the opportunity to present the subject of employee travel and how expenses are paid. Matt Bennett suggested that a per diem needed to be in place. After Sonia Boling presented the Federal amount as a guide. Jay Sabella made a motion for the office manager to continue to book the lodging accommodations and that food spending should be paid to employees retroactively via a per diem payment of \$40 for half days and \$68 for whole days of travel. Employees will pay for their own meals and receive a per diem reimbursement check. Receipts will not be needed to receive the reimbursement check. Company credit cards are not to be used. Jay Sabella made a motion to accept, with Dylan Osmon making a second motion, approved by unanimous vote.

### **Other Business:**

- There was no HR business to conduct.

### **Meeting Adjourned:**

There were no other business or water users present at this meeting, so Jay Sabella made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Dylan Osmon provided a second and the motion passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dylan Osmon  
Interim Secretary

Prepared by  
Paula Lambert – Water Clerk  
and Kim Jones – Office Manager

Board Approved: 03/19/2026