Clear Lake/Clearwater Sewer Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 22, 2026

CALL TO ORDER
Chair Lawrence called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. at the Clearwater City Hall.

ROLL CALL
Present: Chair Lawrence, Vice Chair Geonner, Members Everett and Plaggerman.
Absent: Member Nelson.
Staff Present: Director Smythe.
Staff Absent: Operator Kirchenbauer, Treasurer Hill.
Guests Present: None.
A quorum was declared present.

1. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
- **MOTION** by Plaggerman to approve Agenda as presented, seconded by Goenner, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

2. **PUBLIC FORUM**
None.

3. **CONSENT AGENDA**
   a. **Approval of Minutes from November 20, 2025 Regular Meeting**
   b. **Approval of Minutes from December 11, 2025 Special Meeting**
   c. **Approval of Claims/Accounts Payable for November 2025**
   d. **Approval of Claims/Accounts Payable for December 2025**
   e. **Res 2025-06 – Approving 2026 Budget**
   f. **Res 2026-01 – Approving Annual Appointments**
   g. **Res 2026-02 – Pre-Authorization of Claims Payments**
- **MOTION** by Everett to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Goenner, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

4. **OLD BUSINESS**
None.

5. **NEW BUSINESS**
   a. **Res 2026-03 – Approving Re-Hire of Chief Plant Operator (MOTION)**
   - Smythe gave an overview of the proposed resolution recommending the re-hire Jon Forsell.
   - Smythe noted that Forsell would like to cut his hours back to 32 hours a week, which would require an amendment to the employee handbook, as it requires 36 hours for a full-time position. Chair Lawrence stated that a change would make it consistent with the city of Clearwater's policy, which requires 32 hours per week for full-time employees.
   - Members discussed some of the reasons for Forsell's leaving and how to address going forward. Lawrence noted that staff will need to work out those issues, but that Forsell knows what he's coming back to.

- Smythe reiterated the recommendation to re-hire Forsell, as he was a well-liked and respected member of the team who did excellent work for the operation. It would be difficult to match his qualifications on the open market.
- **MOTION** by Everett to approve Resolution 2026-03, seconded by Lawrence, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

b. Discuss Employee Handbook Hours (MOTION)

- **MOTION** by Lawrence to amend employee handbook definition of full-time employee to 32 hours per week, seconded by Everett, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

c. Discuss Forensic Accounting Services

- Smythe outlined the two proposals from forensic accountants to investigate the Sewer Authority financial data from the period when Kari Koren was the Treasurer 02/01/2018 – 11/01/2021. A third company declined to provide a quote due to their workload. The two quotes range from a very basic review and testing of data to an in-depth investigation. Pricing varies based on the number of hours needed, but both quotes started near $10,000 and went up from there, depending on the level of services requested.
- Members discussed the levels of service desired and the two companies. Both are well-respected and have done work for the Sewer Authority or the two cities previously. After discussion, Members decided to use the same firm that the City of Clear Lake used, as they felt it may be easier to spot patterns since they know what methods were used by the former employee in Clear Lake.
- **MOTION** by Lawrence to accept the quote from Creative Planning, seconded by Plaggerman, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

d. Other Business

- None.

6. REPORTS

a. Board Reports

None.

b. Staff Reports

None.

c. FYI – Flow Report, Surcharge Report, Building Permit Reports

- Smythe noted that building permits and flows were both down for 2025.

7. NEXT MEETING DATE

Next meeting will be May 21, 2026 at the Wastewater Facility.

8. ADJOURN

MOTION to adjourn by Everett, seconded by Plaggerman, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**
Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

ATTEST:

Annita M. Smythe, Director

APPROVED:

Andrea Lawrence Wheeler, Chair