

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
OF FOX METRO WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT  
HELD WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2026**

The Board of Trustees met in a regular monthly meeting at 9:30 A.M. in the offices of the District at the Water Pollution Control Plant on Wednesday, February 18, 2026. Present were Trustee Judith S. Sotir, Trustee Michael Funkey, Trustee Randall Brown, Trustee Chuck Nelson and Trustee Scott Gryder. Also present were District Manager Karen Clementi, Attorney David Silverman (via video), Regulatory Manager Tim Rubis, Human Resources Supervisor Dan Rivera, IT Supervisor Dan Vargas, Senior Project Engineer James Kerrigan, Controller Linnea Scherer and Senior Administrative Assistant Norma Rodriguez.

11623

The bills were presented and read. It was moved by Trustee Brown that the bills that have been presented and paid during the month of January 2026 be approved in the amount of \$3,223,494.96. Motion was seconded by Trustee Gryder, put to vote, and unanimously carried that the bills be paid as presented.

11624

It was moved by Trustee Brown, seconded by Trustee Gryder, put to vote, and unanimously carried that the Financial Report for January 2026 be approved as submitted.

Controller Linnea Scherer addressed the Board with the Controller's Report. Ms. Scherer advised the Board that the District's currently investment portfolio sits at \$89,943,428.00 between Meeder and IMET.

Ms. Scherer stated that over the next two months staff will seek to present and request approval for the District's fiscal year 2027 budget. Staff has an expected budget shortfall, which is simply the spending down of the District's investment reserves.

District balances are also important to keep in mind as future rate increases are concerned and what the responsibilities are to the District ratepayers.

11625

It was moved by Trustee Brown, seconded by Trustee Nelson, put to vote, and the Motion was unanimously carried that the Controller's Report be approved as written.

11626

It was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Brown, put to vote, and the Motion was unanimously carried that the minutes of the January 21, 2026 Regular Board Meeting be approved as written. Each of the Trustees having received and read copies of said minutes before the meeting.

In Public Comments, Trustee Sotir addressed the public and asked for any public comments. Hearing none Trustee Sotir, on behalf of the Board, congratulated all of the employees who celebrated birthdays in the month of February.

Plant Manager Joel Ilseman introduced Maintenance Technician Rich Abner as the union representative this month. Rich has been with the District for five years as a third shift Operator and has recently transferred to the Maintenance Department in January.

With no other Public Comments, it was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Brown, put to vote and the Motion was unanimously carried that the Regular Board Meeting be temporarily adjourned for the Committee of Local Improvements.

The Regular Board Meeting temporarily adjourned at 9:36 A.M.

In the Committee of Local Improvements, Safety and Asset Management Tech Mike Nilges addressed the Board with the 2025 Annual Safety Report. Mr. Nilges gave a breakdown of the 2025 accident report. He advised that there was just 1 accident in 2025 and that accident was OSHA recordable. It totaled to 6 lost days of work for that employee. The location of the accident occurred at the South Plant. The employee experienced heat exhaustion symptoms related to a pre-existing condition rather than environmental workplace condition. Mr. Nilges explained that an OSHA reportable accident is anything that requires more than just first aid measures.

Mr. Nilges explained the Industry and OSHA Standards. He said OSHA has a recordable incident rate that is based off the District's employee hours worked and accidents. In 2025, Fox Metro had a total of 97 employees, the total number of hours worked by all employees were 170,434 and an explanation was given of the method OSHA calculated the standardized incident rates based on North American Industry Classification Standard. Mr. Nilges explained that the industry injury standard is the total recordable cases for wastewater industries. We are comparing industry standards for 2024 because the 2025 standards are not released until October each year. The industry standard reportable for 2024 for every wastewater industry nationwide is 4.9 injuries per year and Fox Metro only had 1. The standard cases with days away from work, job restriction, or transfer is 3.2 days, Fox Metro only had 1. Standard days away from work is 1.9 and Fox Metro only had 1. The standard job restriction or transfer days is 1.3 and Fox Metro had none.

Mr. Nilges gave a safety overview of 2025. He stated that in response to the recent increase in construction activities affecting multiple departments, the Safety Committee is monitoring and verifying the safety measures for all Fox Metro employees at construction sites. The Safety Committee's priority is to ensure a safe work environment through regular assessments and adherence to established safety protocols.



All employees are required to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) – including hard hats, eye protection, and hearing protection at all times in construction areas. Compliance is mandatory to ensure everyone’s safety.

Mr. Nilges advised the Board that Fox Metro conducts an annual safety audit. The Safety audit is a systematic, periodic review of the organization’s protocols, equipment, and documentation to identify hazards and ensure compliance and regulatory standards and the District’s policies.

The Safety Committee’s focus in 2025 was on portable ladder safety. Mr. Nilges advised that all the ladders were inspected for damage, such as stress factors on the side rails, broken/bent steps and spreaders, and make sure that anti-slip shoes are intact. Those that were damaged were removed from service, and the safety labels were ensured to be on the ladder and legible.

The Automation and Electrical departments are continuing to upgrade the life, safety, and health at the District’s lift stations by installing fixed atmosphere gas meters.

Sewer gases such as Hydrogen Sulfide and Methane are byproducts of the sewage Fox Metro treats. These sewer gases are known to have adverse health effects and pose a risk of explosion in concentrated quantities. Safety lights are installed outside the buildings, a red light indicates gas inside the building and unsafe to enter and the exhaust system is turned on. A green light means it is safe to enter the lift station.

The Lift stations completed in 2025 were the Illinois Ave, North Ave, Orchard Road and Sugar Grove lift stations.

Mr. Nilges provided an overview of the 2025 training activities conducted with the Oswego Fire Department. Fox Metro and the Oswego Fire Department held a joint confined space rescue training. Recognizing that Fox Metro employees perform more than 150 confined space entries each year, the Oswego Fire Department requested that the Safety Committee coordinate training with Fox Metro’s in-house rescue team, which consists of eight employees. The training was very successful, and the Fox Metro team performed just as well as the fire department personnel, giving them increased confidence in their rescue capabilities. Confined space rescue training is conducted monthly at the plant.

Trustee Gryder said this training would be a good thing for the Board to see. He stated that in rescues, seconds count and inquired if the Fox Metro rescue team is able to operate the rescue equipment. Mr. Nilges said the Fox Metro team is trained to perform a rescue but their main job is to create a buffer from when the fire department is notified and when they get to the site, so that everything is set up for them and take over the rescue. Discussion ensued.

Trustee Sotir asked about the procedure if an employee is injured and the fire department needs to be called. Mr. Nilges explained that Fox Metro's in-house rescue team would respond first and make contact with the employee in the confined space. The team would begin setting up rescue equipment in preparation for a potential rescue. They would also monitor air quality using an air meter and ventilate the area if gas is detected, while preparing the scene for the fire department's arrival.

Manager Clementi noted that Fox Metro is one of the largest industrial facilities in the county, and the fire department may not always recognize the size of the campus because it is not typically viewed as an industrial site. However, Fox Metro maintains a strong working relationship with the Oswego Fire Department. Safety Supervisor Dan Rivera communicates with the department at least every other month to coordinate joint training opportunities with Fox Metro employees.

During emergencies, a staff member is stationed at the main gate to meet the fire department and direct them to the incident location. Trustee Nelson suggested installing directional signage throughout the plant to help emergency responders navigate the facility more easily. The Oswego fire department has also expressed interest in conducting HAZMAT training due to the number of chemicals used at the plant. Discussion followed.

Mr. Nilges reviewed Fox Metro's Safety goals for 2025: One goal was to complete OSHA 10 online training for all members of the safety representatives. This goal has been completed. Another goal for 2025 that was completed is the installation of 2 gas monitors in 2 lift stations. They were installed at the Sugar Grove and Orchard Road lift stations. Completed in 2025 the CPR certification of 18 employees.

Mr. Nilges said the goals for 2026 are as follows:

- Conduct air quality tests in designated areas
- Conduct a mock OSHA inspection
- Conduct a thorough review of the road placards around the plant to enhance safety. This includes assessing speed limits, identifying blind spots, ensuring the visibility of stop signs, and verifying visitor placards.

With no other matters to come before the Committee of Local Improvements, it was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Nelson, put to vote and the Motion was unanimously carried that the Committee of Local Improvements adjourn and the Regular Board Meeting reconvene.

The regular Board Meeting reconvened at 10:00 A.M.

At 10:00 A.M Manager Clementi opened read aloud bids received for the 2026-01 Sanitary Sewer Televising, Lining, and Repair Project as follows: National Power Rodding – Total Bid \$2,908,000.00; Visu Sewer – Total Bid \$2,331,475.00. After

11629

discussion, it was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Gryder, put to vote and unanimously carried to accept the bid from Visu-Sewer in the amount of \$2,331,475.00 and hold the bid from National Power Rodding in the amount of \$2,908,000.00 pending review from staff for approval.

11630

Manager Clementi presented the Intergovernmental Agreement between Fox Metro and the Village of North Aurora for the investigation and repair of sanitary sewers at various locations in North Aurora, Illinois, for Board approval. The agreement formalizes the service-sharing arrangement that both entities have maintained for many years. Following discussion, Trustee Funkey moved to approve the agreement as presented. The motion was seconded by Trustee Gryder. Upon a vote, the motion unanimously carried that the Intergovernmental Agreement between Fox Metro and the Village of North Aurora for the Investigation and Repair of Sanitary Sewers at various locations in North Aurora, IL be approved as presented.

11631

Manager Clementi presented Ordinance No. 950 to the Board for approval of the Intrepid Oswego, LLC Annexation of the 8-21 acre parcel located at the Southwest corner of Route 34 and Orchard Road, Oswego, IL. After discussion, it was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Nelson, put to vote and unanimously carried to approve Ordinance No. 950 for the Intrepid Oswego, LLC Annexation of the 8-21 acre parcel located at the Southwest corner of Route 34 and Orchard Road, Oswego, IL as presented.

Manager Clementi addressed the Board regarding the scheduled May 31, 2026, user rate increase under Ordinance No. 905. She noted that the Board of Trustees adopted the ordinance on September 22, 2021, which planned a 5% annual increase over five years. Accordingly, the user rate was set to rise on June 1, 2026, from \$8.26 to \$8.68 per thousand gallons. As of the January 2026 financial report, the District holds over \$115 million in current assets.

Manager Clementi stated that an increase in user rates on June 1, 2026 is not necessary. Although staff budgeted a \$2 million deficit for the current fiscal year, the District is projected to end with a surplus. Even in the event of a deficit, the District has sufficient funds to cover both expected and unforeseen expenses. Staff recommends that the Trustees vote to forgo the June 1, 2026, user rate increase at this time.

11632

It was moved by Trustee Brown, seconded by Trustee Gryder, put to vote and unanimously to forgo the June 1, 2026 user rate increase based on staff's direction that the increase is not necessary at this time.

Trustee Funkey asked whether a simple motion to postpone the rate increase would suffice. Attorney Dave Silverman responded that the Board can accept this as staff's direction and proceed accordingly. He noted that he and District staff will



review Ordinance No. 905 to determine if any additional action should be placed on next month's Board meeting agenda.

The next item discussed was an update on the District's renewable energy projects and was presented by Shawn Ajazi of Progressive Business Solutions. Mr. Ajazi began by updating the Board on Solar Field #2N, which had experienced an inverter fire. He reported that the inverter manufacturer conducted a comprehensive study. Their findings identified three potential causes: workmanship, a faulty inverter, or moisture. Based on these results, General Energy Corp formally requested that all inverters at Fox Metro Solar Field #2N be issued a full warranty recall. Five new inverters have been ordered from CPS, with expected delivery by February 27, 2026, followed by installation over 2–3 business days, (weather permitting). General Energy Corp will coordinate onsite activities with Progressive and Fox Metro staff with no additional cost to the District.

Mr. Ajazi then updated the Board on the electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure. In late 2025, Progressive and staff began evaluating Fox Metro property for EV charging stations, considering available state incentives to support fleet electrification, employee public access, and long-term decarbonization goals. Progressive collaborated with Fox Metro staff to develop project specifications and a Request for Qualifications for a direct purchase.

Together, they identified strategic locations for five dual-port stations (10 total ports) at the O&M Building, Q Garage, and behind Building P3. Three contractors—Veterans Energy Team, American Energy Group, and Universal INS—submitted proposals for turnkey projects, including Level 2 and Level 3 charging stations. Staff recommended Level 3 chargers to accommodate potential future upgrades for larger vehicles or heavy-duty equipment.

After reviewing bids, staff recommended Veterans Energy Team as the preferred partner. The total project cost for 10 ports is \$909,000. With anticipated ComEd incentives of \$804,000, Fox Metro's net cost would be \$105,000. Veterans Energy Team will provide upfront capital for the project. Annual maintenance and software costs are not included.

Mr. Ajazi noted that the new ComEd Vehicle Charging Program will not open until February 2028. Fox Metro must submit documentation to secure funding allocation. If the \$804,000 in incentives is not granted, the project will not proceed. Progressive and Fox Metro staff recommend moving forward with preparing the submission so that, once funding is approved, the project can advance with Veterans Energy Team.

Manager Clementi emphasized that, despite federal developments, technology is improving, and incentives for electric fleet vehicles are expected through



District purchasing co-ops and Sourcewell in the future. She noted that having charging infrastructure in place is essential before investing in electric vehicles. She further suggested taking advantage of state-level rebates and phasing in fleet vehicles when it is financially advantageous.

Trustee Funkey inquired whether the charging system would become obsolete if infrastructure is built now and electric vehicles are added later. Manager Clementi explained that Level 3 stations were chosen for their advanced technology. Discussion followed.

Finally, Mr. Ajazi reported that Progressive and staff are actively pursuing a battery grant application. Conversations with the program administrator have focused on leveraging the District's existing projects to recover funds. The total grant pool is \$7 million, with individual project awards ranging from \$200,000 to \$2 million. Remaining payments for the battery project and potential lift station projects may be submitted for consideration. These grants target wastewater utilities and energy resilience. Manager Clementi noted that, with ten awards available, the District's battery projects are strong candidates for funding.

Senior Project Engineer James Kerrigan addressed the Board with the Construction Project Report. Mr. Kerrigan requested approval of Partial Payment No. 19 to Williams Brothers Construction, Inc., in the amount of \$520,169.64 for the North Waste Water Treatment Plant Bar Screen Replacement Project. The project is 67% complete and the pay request was reviewed by Trotter and Associates. Electrical and piping work is continuing in Building B1. Grit pumps and piping continue to be installed in Building B0.

Mr. Kerrigan requested approval of Payment No. 8 to Dahme Mechanical Industries in the amount of \$224,884.18 for the Building K Plug Valve Replacement Project. The project is 79% complete and the pay request was reviewed by staff. Work on the first pump is nearing completion, and work on the next pump will commence.

Mr. Kerrigan reported that the Battery Install Project with General Energy is 10% complete and there is no pay request this month. Permit drawings have been sent to the various permitting agencies for their review.

Mr. Kerrigan requested approval Partial Payment No. 6 to Whittaker Construction and Excavating, in the amount of \$321,339.68 for the North Waste Water Treatment Plant Renewable Natural Gas Utilization Project. The project is 18% complete and the pay request was reviewed by Trotter and Associates. Interior piping and painting work is continuing. Work on the foundations for the first of the new structures is underway.



Mr. Kerrigan reported that the Sewer Maintenance Contract Project with Visu-Sewer of Illinois LLC is 46% complete and there is no pay request this month. Work is continuing on the sewers in the vicinity of Galena Blvd., and the Sugar Grove pump station.

Mr. Kerrigan reported that the Galena Blvd. MH Liner Installation project with Steve Spiess Construction is complete but there is no pay request this month. Payment will be made at the next Board Meeting.

11633

It was moved by Trustee Brown, seconded by Trustee Funkey, put to vote and the Motion was unanimously carried that the Construction Project Report be approved as published and payments be made as requested.

Trustee Sotir requested an Executive Session to discuss Pending and Probable or Imminent Litigation.

11634

It was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Brown, put to vote and the Motion was unanimously carried to revise the Agenda for the Executive Session to include setting the price for the sale or lease of property.

11635

It was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Nelson put to vote and by roll call was unanimously carried to temporarily adjourn the regular Board Meeting for an Executive Session to discuss pending and probable or imminent litigation and setting the price for the sale or lease of property.

The Regular Board Meeting temporarily adjourned for Executive Session at 10:38 A.M.

11636

It was moved by Trustee Funkey seconded by Trustee Brown, put to vote and unanimously carried that the Executive Session be adjourned and resume the Regular Board Meeting.

The Regular Board Meeting reconvened at 10:45A.M.

11637

It was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Brown, put to vote and unanimously carried that clarification be made to the previous Motion made by Trustee Funkey to amend the Executive Session Motion to include discussion of sale and purchase price for respective pieces of property to be described in Executive Session.

11638

It was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Gryder put to vote and by roll call was unanimously carried to temporarily adjourn the regular Board Meeting for an Executive Session to establishing the price to sell real property, consideration of acquisition of real property, discuss pending and probable or imminent litigation.

The Regular Board Meeting temporarily adjourned for Executive Session at 10:46 A.M.

It was moved by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Trustee Brown, put to vote and unanimously carried to temporary adjourn Executive Session and resume the Regular Board Meeting.

The Regular Board Meeting reconvened at 10:52 A.M.

Mr. Ajazi addressed the Board regarding the proposed agreement for Fox Metro to acquire ownership of the solar array formerly managed by GRNE. Under the agreement, Fox Metro would purchase and assume ownership of the system located on District property. The District would retain ownership of the system assets, environmental attributes, and associated contracts and documentation. Upon closing, Fox Metro would assume responsibility for operations, maintenance, and performance, including obligations under the existing SREC agreement and the associated production risks. This structure ensures long-term control of the asset while eliminating reliance on third-party ownership.

Trustee Sotir asked about the advantage to the District. Mr. Ajazi stated that purchasing the system now saves the District approximately \$80,000 compared to letting the RECs run out under the current 25-year agreement. Discussion followed on non-financial benefits, including Fox Metro's existing experience maintaining two other solar fields. High-level maintenance costs are expected to be minimal, as Fox Metro's Electrical Department can integrate the work into existing schedules.

Trustee Funkey inquired if staff could manage maintenance of the system and surrounding area. Manager Clementi expressed confidence, noting the electrical staff will have the required certifications and experience with more sophisticated equipment. Staff already handles occasional mowing, as GRNE does not provide this service at the frequency needed by the Village of Montgomery's Property Standards.

Trustee Nelson asked about legal review. Mr. Ajazi confirmed that Progressive Solutions reviewed the agreement for FOIA compliance, indemnification, and other key provisions. If the Board wishes to proceed, the agreement can be sent to Attorney Silverman and the District's Risk Management firm for further review, including insurance considerations. Discussion included railroad easement considerations.

Trustee Funkey referenced a memo from Mr. Ajazi highlighting key contract risk terms. Mr. Ajazi stated that improvements and clarifications are ongoing with ENRG, and these will be outlined in the final draft. He anticipates



having a contract ready as soon as next week, pending legal and risk management review.

Trustee Nelson asked about security concerns. Mr. Ajazi noted the existing camera and weather station system, with additional cameras installed by Fox Metro staff. Manager Clementi noted ongoing security issues with trespassing from the nearby railroad tracks, independent of the solar field. Trustee Brown asked whether the area could store District materials. Manager Clementi said staff plan to present a concept to build Morton buildings and store semi-trucks and seasonal equipment as part of the “one District, one campus” plan. Trustee Gryder suggested involving local law enforcement in security efforts. Manager Clementi agreed to request a security assessment from Kane and Kendall Counties.

11640

It was moved by Trustee Brown, seconded by Trustee Nelson, and by roll call vote, unanimously carried to temporarily adjourn the regular Board Meeting for an Executive Session to discuss real property sale pricing, potential acquisitions, and pending or probable litigation.

The Regular Board Meeting temporarily adjourned for Executive Session at 11:15 A.M.

The Regular Board Meeting reconvened at 11:45 A.M

No decisions were made in Executive Session.

11641

Manager Clementi requested the Board’s approval and the Clerk’s signature to certify that, at today’s regular meeting, the Trustees approved a Leave of Absence for a Fox Metro employee. She asked for a motion to grant Michael Ortiz past service credit for his Leave of Absence from April 1, 2020, to May 31, 2020, and from August 1, 2020, to September 30, 2020, in accordance with the IMRF Benefit Protection Leave Provision. Trustee Funkey moved to approve, Trustee Gryder seconded, and the motion was put to a vote and unanimously carried. The Board, based on staff recommendation, thereby approves Michael Ortiz’s Leave of Absence and the associated past service credit as outlined.

11642

With no other business to come before the Board, it was moved by Trustee Gryder, seconded by Trustee Funkey, put to vote and the Motion unanimously carried that the Regular Board Meeting be adjourned.

Board Meeting adjourned at 11:50 A.M.

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