

HEBER PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1078 Dogwood Rd., Suite 104
Heber, CA 92249

Minutes

Thursday, September 17, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Meeting was Called to Order by President Pompeyo Tabarez at 6:00pm
2. **ROLL CALL:** All those present included President Pompeyo Tabarez, Vice President Delfino Matus, Director Tony Sandoval, Director Helen Diaz-Molina, Director Sarah Curry, General Counsel Steve Walker, General Manager Madeline Dessert, Finance Manager Luis Carrasco, Clerk of the Board Jacob Bermudez
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** President Tabarez Lead the Pledge of Allegiance
4. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** Director Sandoval Motioned to Approve the Modified Agenda to Have Item 9.F Authoring the General Manager to Proceed with the Contract Amendment with LT Municipal Consultants Moved to the be Discussed Before Item 9.A Award Auditing Services to the Lowest Responsive Bidder Harshwal and Company LLP. Director Curry seconded the Motion. Motion Carried
AYES: Director Curry, Director Sandoval, Director Diaz-Molina, Vice President Matus, President Tabarez /
NOES: 0
5. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** No Public Comment received
6. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:** Public Hearing Opened at 6:04pm
 - A. Conduct a Proposition 218 Hearing Regarding Water and Sanitary Sewer Rate Adjustments – LT Municipal Consultants**ITEM 6.A Public Comments:**
 1. Sandoval Plasencia expressed concern about the proposed rate adjustments, stating that his current bill could increase by 50%. He also stated that no one in Heber is a low-water user and that the District is at fault for not increasing rates over the past five years.
 2. Jose Morales stated that he disagreed with such a large rate increase.
 3. Ernesto Gutierrez stated that the Heber Public Utility District is seeking to increase its reserves from \$2 million to \$3 million.
 4. Veronica Torres questioned why the District had not implemented smaller annual increases and was now seeking a substantial increase. She raised concerns about administrative costs, comparisons with neighboring communities, and the lack of a response to her emailed request for information about how additional revenue would be spent. She requested greater transparency and accountability.
 5. Sergio Apolinar stated that inflation had remained stable for some time and that the Board now wanted to catch up. He also stated that he emailed the Board and General Manager requesting additional information but was asked to schedule a meeting.
 6. Maria Fiero explained that many residents cannot afford the increase because Community Facilities District (CFD) charges have also increased for homeowners. She questioned why the Board chose to increase rates at this time.
 7. Diahna Garcia Ruiz expressed dissatisfaction with the meeting room setup and the lack of seating for attendees. She also questioned whether the proposed rates reflected the actual cost of providing service.

8. Armando Equihua asked whether verbal opposition would be considered and requested clarification regarding the deadline for residents to submit written protests.
9. Carmen Borjon did not wish to speak but expressed her disapproval of the proposed rate adjustments.
10. Berta Delgado stated that she believed most of the additional revenue generated by the proposed adjustments would be used for administrative expenses. She requested greater transparency regarding how the funds would be spent.
11. Gildardo Delgado stated that he had been paying geothermal-related bonds for more than 10 years and had been promised growth in Heber but had not seen it. He also stated that he had submitted public records requests regarding how funds were being spent but had not received a response.
12. David Escobedo expressed concern about the proposed adjustments, noting that his property taxes had recently increased by 15% and that he had never seen the streets swept. He also stated that Heber lacks stores and businesses that could help distribute costs more equitably among customers.
13. Lucia Rivas did not wish to speak but expressed her disapproval of the proposed rate adjustments.
14. Nestor Angeles questioned the scope of the District's responsibilities, stating that when water lines break at a residence, the District informs customers that they are responsible for the repairs.
15. Jose Caloca stated that residents are upset and frustrated with the proposed rate adjustments. He stated that more than 5,000 families in Heber would unite to demand transparency regarding District expenditures.
16. Paula Llanas expressed concern about inadequate communication regarding public meetings and meeting notices. She stated that the only reminder was included in a mailer that many residents discard.
17. Maria Fiero stated that tenants should be allowed to submit protests because the proposed rate adjustments would also affect them.
18. Armando Equihua stated that during the previous rate increase process, many of the signatures he collected were not validated, which he believed allowed the increase to proceed.

After review Alison Lechowicz from LT Municipal Consultant Stated that there are a Total of 1,583 Parcels within Heber that are Eligible to Submit a Prop 218 Protest, and that the majority of the vote needed to defeat the process is 792 votes against. Alison Reported that the Heber Public Utility District Received a total of 119 Prop 218 Protest Form.

- B. Adopt Resolution Number 2026-18 Setting Monthly Water and Sanitary Sewer Rates Within the Heber Public Utility District Service Area – LT Municipal Consultants
 Director Diaz-Molina motioned to table Item 7.b Adopting Resolution 2026-18 Setting Monthly Water and Sanitary Sewer Rates Within the Heber Public Utility District Service area for October's Regular Board Meeting. Motion Failed, Lack of second

President Tabarez Motioned to Approve Item 7.b Adopting Resolution 2026-18 Setting Monthly Water and Sanitary Sewer Rates Within the Heber Public Utility District Service Area. Motion Failed, Lack of Second.

President Tabarez Motioned to requested that the item return at the next meeting with Options A and B and additional alternatives reflecting \$10 and \$20 increases. Director Diaz-Molina Seconded the Motion. Motion Carried. AYES: Director Curry, Director Sandoval, Director Diaz-Molina, Vice President Matus, President Tabarez / NOES: 0

7. **CONSENT AGENDA:** Director Diaz-Molina Motioned to Approve the Consent Agenda. Director Sandoval Seconded the Motion. Motion Carried. AYES: Director Curry, Director Sandoval, Director Diaz-Molina, Vice President Matus, President Tabarez / NOES: 0

A. Approval of the Minutes for the Regular Meeting on July 16, 2026

B. Approval of Demands for July 2026

C. Approval of Demands for August 2026

D. Authorize the Release of the Request for Proposal for the Wastewater Treatment Plant SCADA and Computer Upgrade

E. Authorize the General Manager to Purchase the Replacement Light Pole and Fixture from Intersection of Sparrow Street and Maple Ave not to Exceed \$4,000– General Manager

F. Authorize the General Manager to Proceed with the Sewer Cleaning Project not to Exceed \$15,000 – General Manager

8. REPORTS:

A. President and Director's Comments

B. Operations Report for July and August 2026 – Reported with no additions

C. General Manager's Report – Reported with no additions

D. Grants Update – Reported with no additions

9. NEW BUSINESS: Discussion and Possible Action

A. Authorize the General Manger to Proceed with the Contract Amendment with LT Municipal Consultants to Complete the Parks and Recreation Impact Fee Study – General Manager

Director Sandoval Motioned to Authorize the General Manger to Proceed with the Contract Amendment with LT Municipal Consultants to Complete the Parks and Recreation Impact Fee Study. Director Diaz-Molina Seconded the Motion. Motion Carried. AYES: Director Curry, Director Sandoval, Director Diaz-Molina, Vice President Matus, President Tabarez / NOES: 0

B. Award Professional Auditing Services to the Lowest Responsive Bidder Harshwal And Company LLP – General Manager

President Tabarez Motioned to Award Professional Auditing Services to the Lowest Responsive Bidder Harshwal And Company LLP. Director Sandoval Seconded the Motion. Motion Carried. AYES: Director Curry, Director Sandoval, Director Diaz-Molina, Vice President Matus, President Tabarez / NOES: 0

C. Introduce and Waive the First Reading of Ordinance Number 2026-19 Adopting the Water Service Capacity Fees – General Manager

President Tabarez Motioned to Introduce and Waive the First Reading of Ordinance Number 2026-19 Adopting the Water Service Capacity Fees. Director Sandoval Seconded the Motion. Motion Carried. AYES: Director Curry, Director Sandoval, Director Diaz-Molina, Vice President Matus, President Tabarez / NOES: 0

D. Introduce and Waive the First Reading of Ordinance Number 2026-20 Adopting the Water Service Impact Fees - General Manager

President Tabarez Motioned to Introduce and Waive the First Reading of Ordinance Number 2026-19 Adopting the Water Service Capacity Fees. Director Curry Seconded the Motion. Motion Carried. AYES: Director Curry, Director Sandoval, Director Diaz-Molina, Vice President Matus, President Tabarez / NOES: 0

E. Introduce and Waive the First Reading of Ordinance Number 2026-21 Adopting the Sanitary Sewer Service Capacity Fees – General Manager
Director Curry Motioned to Introduce and Waive the First Reading of Ordinance Number 2026-21 Adopting the Sanitary Sewer Service Capacity Fees. Director Diaz-Molina Seconded the Motion. Motion Carried. AYES: Director Curry, Director Sandoval, Director Diaz-Molina, Vice President Matus, President Tabarez / NOES: 0

F. Introduce and Waive the First Reading of Ordinance Number 2026-22 Adopting the Sanitary Sewer Service Impact Fees – General Manager
Director Curry Motioned to Introduce and Waive the First Reading of Ordinance Number 2026-22 Adopting the Sanitary Sewer Service Impact Fees. Director Sandoval Seconded the Motion. Motion Carried. AYES: Director Curry, Director Sandoval, Director Diaz-Molina, Vice President Matus, President Tabarez / NOES: 0

~~F. Authorize the General Manger to Proceed with the Contract Amendment with LT Municipal Consultants to Complete the Parks and Recreation Impact Fee Study – General Manager~~

G. Authorize the General Manager to Proceed with the Repairs of the Vactor Truck not to Exceed \$30,000 – General Manager
Director Sandoval Motioned to Authorize the General Manager to Proceed with the Repairs of the Vactor Truck not to Exceed \$35,000. Director Diaz-Molina Seconded the Motion. Motion Carried. AYES: Director Curry, Director Sandoval, Director Diaz-Molina, Vice President Matus, President Tabarez / NOES: 0

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Fall Fiesta will be Held on Saturday, October 24, 2026 at Tito Huerta Park.

CLOSED SESSION: Director Curry Motion to Enter Closed Session at 9:22pm. Vice President Seconded the Motion. Motion Carried. AYES: Director Curry, Director Sandoval, Director Diaz-Molina, Vice President Matus, President Tabarez / NOES: 0

To ensure privacy during Closed Session, we will observe the following procedures:

- The Board President will enter Closed Session. Members of the public will exit the boardroom.

A. Potential Litigation (Government Code § 54956.9(d))
No Reportable Action Taken

11. ADJOURNMENT: Meeting Adjourned at 9:25pm