

**Rockdale County Water, Sewer, and Stormwater Advisory Council Meeting**  
**October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Meeting Minutes**  
**Meeting Held at the CE Steele Community Center**  
**1040 Oakland Avenue, Conyers, GA 30012**

**ATTENDEES:** Chair Nicole Lichner, Vice Chair Telfany Morgan; Mark Hardgrove, Tom Harrison, George Kelecheck, John Nix, Richard Davis, Andrea Lee, Kimbry Peek, Terrence Simpkins

Chair Nicole Lichner called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

**Approval of the August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Meeting Minutes.** The meeting minutes were approved as presented. Tom Harrison made a motion to accept the minutes as presented and the motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by John Nix. The August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Meeting Minutes were unanimously accepted.

**Unfinished Business:**

- Communication for Citizens – Update
  - Chair Lichner acknowledged Rockdale Water Department’s development and maintenance of an informative and user-friendly Facebook website that is available for all citizens to access and gain additional information regarding RWR’s ongoing activities, news updates, etc. – including water main break locations, timing for repairs, etc. Chair Lichner also expressed her request for Stormwater to continue their development of a website to enhance communication with Rockdale citizens. Chair advised that as information is provided on RWR’s website, this information is shared with various groups within the Rockdale Community – thereby, increasing the citizen’s awareness of what is happening within our community. Director Terrence Simpkins advised that Stormwater is finalizing their website recommendations for Chair Van Ness’ review and approval, with the hope that Stormwater’s web-based presence will be online soon.
- Rockdale County Stormwater Fee Approval – Update
  - Director Simpkins advised that a 10% across the board rate increase has been approved effective immediately, and County is now developing a “tier” rating system that will be implemented with a 5% increase over the next 4-5 years based on each customer’s impervious surface. Upon finalization of the tier rating system, specific communications will be developed to further clarify the rollout within our community. Director Simpkins referenced 2 fees that are impacted by the rate increase: (1) permitting fees have been

upgraded; and (2) utility fees. Director Simpkins stated that the recent market study showed that Stormwater needed significantly more funding, but the initial adjustment of 10% will provide a much needed \$500K adjustment to the budget, which will Stormwater perform an additional 5 jobs. Director Simpkins acknowledged that the impact of the fees is not exorbitant but would definitely help Stormwater address some of the County's infrastructure needs. Group conversations were held regarding the fact that citizens are already seeing the 10% Stormwater increase in their new tax bill. Director Simpkins confirmed that the increase was effective as of the date the Resolution was accepted by the BOC. George Kelecheck indicated that his tax bill reflected an increase from \$112 to \$125 (10% increase as stated).

As there was no additional Unfinished Business to discuss, John Nix made a motion to end the Unfinished Business discussions and move into the New Business discussions. Tom Harrison 2<sup>nd</sup> that motion. The motion was unanimously carried.

## **New Business**

- **Haynes Watershed Update** - George Kelecheck provided an update on information he received during his recent participation in various meetings and conferences and advised that the Army Core of Engineers has approved the designation of \$250,000 to perform a 100% federal assessment of the watershed. Working directly with Mr. Brian Shoate, Army Core of Engineers, George advised that the team is seeking MS4 data from each County. The MS4 mapping will help identify the flows and holding areas within the watershed. George advised that Mr. Shoate will visit during November to provide preliminary data with 7 engineers visiting over a two-week timeline to critically review the watershed. Drones will be used to zoom in on the site as needed and will allow the team to better view and calculate the amount of silt accumulating within the watershed. This activity will be informative and exciting. George further stated that all of the requisite participant approval letters have been received except Snellville – which should be received shortly. George confirmed their verbal approval and anticipates their written confirmation soon.
  - Tom Harrison asked if the process would identify the viability of the dam. George Kelecheck stated that he believed it would and acknowledged that future reclamation agreements may be required from residents with property nearby if adjustments were needed. George also confirmed that Rockdale County has water flow for the next 150+ years, with the overall goal of ensuring sustainability. George stated that the funds used during 2026 will

be used to benefit the County. George enthusiastically stated that the project is underway

- **Rockdale Water 2026 Proposed Water Rate Changes** - Director Peek presented a general update on the proposed RWR rate change that is currently being reviewed and considered by the BOC. Director Peek reminded all present that the rate increase has NOT been approved, and as previously presented to the Advisory Council, RWR has recommended a 7% across the board rate increase for all customers. The proposed rate change would become effective January 2026.
- **PFA's Testing Update** – Deputy Director Richard Davis presented a brief PFAs Testing Update, stating that RWR had received confirmation that after the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 rounds of sampling, Rockdale County's water had no detectable PFAs in our water! Deputy Director Davis reviewed the handouts provided, stating that all in the spirit of transparency, all information has been posted to our website for public review and education.
  - Deputy Director Davis reviewed the documents presented and advised that the EPA conducts the tests – not Rockdale County. Rockdale gathers the samples and submits them directly to EPA for their testing. Rockdale County's test results reflect that Rockdale County's PFOS (the water that has been treated and is ready to be delivered to homes and businesses) was <0.0038. Deputy Director Davis pointed out that the trigger level for PFOS has been established at 2.0 – we are at 0.0038!! Rockdale Water Resources results reflect total compliance with all 3 test results, and the 4<sup>th</sup> test result will be provided shortly.
  - Conversations arose regarding how we can best communicate this great news throughout the community. Deputy Director Davis reminded all that the information is available on our website for ease of viewing and accessibility. All were advised that the lengthy information has not been incorporated in a flyer for placement into water bills due to the size and expenses associated with the cost of the publication.
  - Tom Harrison asked for specific information regarding the actual cost of these tests that were available to all citizens, specifically those on well water who may want to gain personal insight into their PFOS water levels. Director Peek advised that citizens are encouraged to contact the EPA/EPD directly for assistance and assured all present that the EPD would provide the information needed to gain access to personal testing information.
  - Director Peek advised that the test itself is not a requirement, but it is something that Rockdale County Water Resources elects to do to ensure the delivery of safe water to our residents. George Kelecheck and Tom Harrison pointed out that all communities will be required to conduct such tests by April 2026, and it was good that Rockdale was ahead of the curve on this matter. Rockdale cannot perform this inspection. George Kelecheck also stated that the Federal Government does not require publication of these

test results at this time, but publication requirements will be instituted in 2029. All agreed this was a GREAT story for RWR to tell!

- George Kelecheck asked where the actual onsite testing measurements taken by the Water Treatment Plant occurred (e.g., were the samples taken before the water enters the pipes (e.g., the intake valve), or after the water had been treated (the outlet valve)? Director Peek stated that water sampling occurs routinely at BOTH the intake and the outlet. If the levels are above established trigger levels, alarms would sound, and the water treatment process automatically stops. Compliance is crucial for water safety.
- Vice Chair Telfany Morgan requested documentation supporting PFOS readings from year to year. Director Peek advised that we should be able to gather such documentation and will provide this information as quickly as possible. Chair Nicole Lichner requested that RWR share this information on their website for public communication. Chair Lichner also advised that this information was available on the EPD website.

- **Advisory Council's Request for Information from Stormwater Management and Rockdale Water Resources:**

- Director Simpkins provided the following updates: Stormwater has 55 projects currently – 18.1 million CIP current list; budget was \$5,736,808; Expenditures leave balance of \$2MM etc. Discussions also arose regarding budget for staffing, etc.
- Director Peek will provide RWR updates during the November 2025 meeting. To support RWR's presentation, George Kelecheck recommended the visual presentation of a map of Rockdale depicting the location of each of the pump stations (e.g., Quigg Branch, Almand Branch, Honey Creek, etc.) that would serve as a visual representation of where the work is being performed. This would help the Advisory Council and the community better understand how the funds are being spent across the entire county (e.g., what's happening on the north side, what's happening on the south side, etc.).

- **Advisory Council Comments**

- Tom Harrison requested additional clarification regarding potential future Stormwater projects. Director Simpkins clarified that the majority of the current and future projects would be related to infrastructure demands. As an example, Director Simpkins discussed the ongoing need to address infrastructure repairs and replacement of prior historically used corrugated metal pipes that have a life span of 25-30 – we are now approaching year 40 for several of these pipes – as such, failures are occurring on a more frequent basis. Examples included stream crossings, and pipes running underground

through yards that are corrugated metal that are consequently developing as sink holes due to decay, etc. Director Simpkins briefly discussed the importance of the Master Plan as a tool to help Stormwater drill down into the locations and the extent of the work to be done. Director Simpkins stated that Stormwater is trying to get out of the reactionary mode and actually get ahead of the game.

- General discussions arose regarding RWR's leak detection program. Tom Harrison requested that the Advisory Council be kept abreast of the County's overall progress to date associated with our successes associated with leak detection – quarterly updates were recommended. Tom Harrison also recommended the incorporation of data reflecting the successful reduction of water leaks within Rockdale County on the water bill at least quarterly to communicate the successful trend. Additionally, Director Peek will work with the team to provide updates via our website as well during our meetings.
- General discussions arose regarding SPLOST and the accessibility of SPLOST funds for both Stormwater and RWR's general projects. It was confirmed that if approved by the community, SPLOST funds can be utilized for very specific, agreed-upon projects, and all SPLOST funds are established and carefully monitored and maintained by the SPLOST Committee to ensure adherence to SPLOST's designated fund usage only.

- **Public Comments**

- Mrs. Elaine Nash asked if RWR's proposed rate increase included future funding for the replacement of residential meters as replacement is required. Director Peek acknowledged that the rate increase does seek to incorporate anticipated costs associated with future meter replacements within the Rockdale County community. Director Peek advised that meter replacement efforts are ongoing – small meter replacements should be completed this year, and large meter replacements efforts will begin next year.
- General discussions arose regarding the need to test large meters - as they have not been tested since 2008. To gain a comprehensive overview of Rockdale County's current meter reporting accuracy, Director Peek advised the Advisory Council that RWR is seeking to partner with consultants to conduct real-time monitoring of all of our meters in the field to clarify all areas associated with meters reporting, billing, and water usage. Mrs. Nash expressed appreciation that RWR is getting serious about meters and water loss and its impact on revenue. Director Peek said that as the project's

parameters are finalized, additional information will be presented to the BOC for review.

- Mrs. Elaine Nash recommended that Stormwater and RWR identify ways to better inform and educate the citizens on the various projects across the County – North, South, East and West. This communication would prove beneficial– as we point to the work being done. It will let people know what is happening in their part of the County. Director Simpkins advised that they are working with Technology Services to develop interactive GIS mapping that will allow citizens to click on the location to view projects in real-time.
- Mrs. Elaine Nash also recommended the placement of “Stormwater at Work” signage throughout the County along work site as a visible marker for citizens to see where their money is being spent. This visibility might of how their contributions help the county might encourage others to proactively pay their Stormwater Bills.
- Chair Lichner reminded Director Simpkins of the importance of Stormwater’s web-based presence and encouraged Stormwater to develop their website as quickly as possible as the web presence ensures communication with the public.
- Charlotte Gellert discussed the RWR Rate Increase and asked if the water rate increase of 7% applied to both Water and Sewer. Director Peek confirmed that, yes, a 7% increase would be applied on the water base, and a 7% increase would be applied to sewer volumetric.
- Discussions arose regarding the County’s plans to “round up” the bills to help establish a fund that would help those who may be unable to pay their bills. Discussions arose regarding criteria that would be help establish funding eligibility, etc. Director Peek will review this recommendation.
- Charlotte Gellert requested additional information regarding LDP fees and asked if Stormwater was receiving the fees (LDP) that were previously associated with Planning & Development? And if so, what was the percentage received. Director Simpkins acknowledged that LDP fees were previously under Planning & Development, and that the receipts were not captured and were minimal. Director Simpkins stated that Stormwater’s new processes that were approved by the BOC will enable us to collect funds for every project that occurs within unincorporated Rockdale and receipts will be tracked. Director Simpkins reminded all that a moratorium is in effect; therefore, we are unable to provide any specific information on revenue enhancements – but that future updates will be provided. Charlotte Gellert

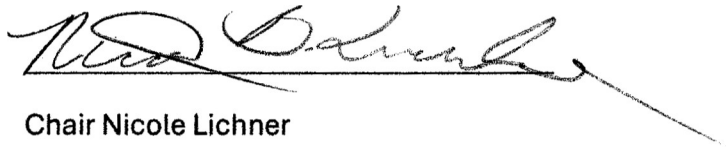
requested a copy of the Stormwater Resolutions Director Simpkins referenced. A copy will be provided.

- General discussions arose regarding the recent acts of vandalism/theft associated with the removal of Rockdale County sewer lids and grates. Director Simpkins stated that individuals have been arrested, and an investigation continues. It was estimated that a manhole cover with locking mechanisms costs \$200, and the grates cost \$180/grate. Unfortunately, Stormwater experienced a need to order 20-40 replacements.
- Charolette Gellert reminded the Advisory Council that information associated with the fund balances is also available on the website and is also presented by chief Sanders during BOC's Financial updates. Citizens are encouraged to review the website if they are unable to attend or listen to the BOC meetings.
- Additional discussions arose regarding Director Simpkin's financial overview presentation for Stormwater – it was noted that the information Director Simpkins presented was more current than the information on the website as his data reflected information as of October 6, 2025. Additional capital funding discussions arose regarding the use of capital funds for major projects and the County's funding capabilities for such projects (e.g., did we budget for GDOT initiatives? Does GDOT reimburse the County for projects? etc.) Clarity was provided associated with GDOT's extensive advance planning for projects (e.g., often 5-15 years in advance of the actual start date) and its impact upon each County's ability to plan budgeting constraints accordingly in preparation for these future projects (e.g., Courtesy Parkway /Salem Road Water, etc.). As an fyi, it was confirmed that GDOT does not reimburse Rockdale County when underground pipes or infrastructure movement is required.
- Group discussions arose regarding enhancements for RWR's Facebook page. Specifically, RWR is asked to include the location of the reported water break, as well as the date and time to capture when the water break occurred and when repair completion is anticipated. It was noted that the information often published on NextDoor does not transfer directly onto Facebook – therefore, consistent distribution of information would prove beneficial to the residents.

There being no additional Public Comments, Chair Lichner advised that our next meeting will be held on Monday, November 3, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. at the CE Steele Community Center, and that Mr. Kaiser has accepted our invitation to meet with the Advisory Council as a special guest during this meeting.

John Nix made a motion to adjourn. Tom Harrison 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. The motion was unanimously passed. The Meeting adjourned 6:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicole Lichner", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Chair Nicole Lichner