

Approved

Pendleton Water Association
Minutes of Executive Board Meeting
98 Poplar Drive
Many, LA 71449
August 23, 2025

I. Call to Order

The Special Board meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m. by Board President Charln Stewart. Board directors in attendance were Charln Stewart, Gloria Thompson, Jerry Burnaman and Bub Sepulvado. Carl Jeanise participated on speakerphone. Also present was Secretary Tony Laska. Proof of quorum was confirmed.

2. EOM/Cenla Environmental Operations Contract Negotiation Irregularities

An unknown person communicated via email to all board members about alleged irregularities between a PWA Board member, Jerry Burnaman, and Jeff Staples of EOM during the negotiation of the contract. President Charln Stewart stated that the message said Mr. Burnaman appeared to be seeking a role in the new contract which, if true would be a conflict with his oversight and decision role on the Board. Jerry Burnaman acknowledged the following:

- He did have conversations with Jeff Staples that included asking what would be in the contract regarding management, who would be responsible for maintenance in the facilities, who would be responsible for maintaining the grounds/grass cutting.
- He said he wasn't looking for a job, but if he were, some significant conditions would have to apply, including resolving the situation with Tony Farrell and the conditions at the plant.
- He said Mike Stewart was putting together a job description for manager; Jerry Burnaman said he probably spoke with Jeff Staples more than once regarding his suitability for the job. Jeff suggested he speak with Charlie Heino at this early stage of the contract.

Jerry Burnaman told the Board that if he had two weeks' time he could have submitted proposals for the same operations contract from two other firms that would be less costly. Mr. Burnaman set up appointments at the plant for each of the prospective bidders, one on Monday, the other on Wednesday to meet with Tony Farrell and survey the property and situation.

- To give the alternative bidders an opportunity to submit "apples to apples" bids, Jerry Burnaman provided them with the draft EOM/Cenla contract verbiage.
- He notified the Board on July 15 that when the other firms saw that a contract had already been signed with EOM/Cenla they backed out from submitting proposals.
- The only way they would submit proposals would be if the EOM/Cenla contract was rescinded.
- Jerry Burnaman relayed this information on August 23: A very informal estimate to "operate the plant" provided by one of the contractors to Mr. Burnaman would be \$25-\$28K, plus they would provide the truck. Without a breakdown and full accounting of services it cannot be determined how this option compares with the Cenla contract cost of \$42k/month which includes SCADA, reporting/regulatory compliance and ongoing repairs to correct deferred maintenance.

Charln Stewart asked how Mr. Burnaman could have signed a \$4,500 check to Tony Farrell for rental of his equipment.

- Jerry Burnaman had been called to the office to co-sign checks as part of routine Board member responsibility. He said he wasn't aware that a decision to cease this kind of payment for rental of equipment was made several months ago, and if he had known he wouldn't have signed it.
- Bub Sepulvado also signed the check when the bank refused it with Tony Farrell's lapsed signature. He was unaware of the prohibition as well.

In August 2017, in exchange for new health insurance coverage, Tony Farrell agreed not to bill for meter readings separate from his regular salary.

- When Frank Davis, who had enforced this demand, left the Board in 2019, Tony Farrell resumed billing for meter readings again. It appears that his pattern was to return to violating requirements as soon as the oversight was relaxed through loss of institutional memory.
- Tony Farrell continued to bill separately for meter readings until 2023 when he was once again ordered to stop doing so.
- These unauthorized charges have totaled at least \$83,000.
- During the tenure of the previous Board, Tony Farrell was told not to write and sign checks to himself or his company. When that oversight was lost with a new board he went back to doing the same thing until he was reined in -again- by the current board
- He recently presented a check to PWA to pay for \$6K worth of water from January 2021 to the present that he had not paid for at his residence on Blockhouse Rd. Unauthorized, someone had apparently revealed this part of the investigation to him. In acknowledging and depositing the payment, Charln Stewart put in writing the years that could be readily documented. It is to be determined whether he paid for residential water between 2018 and 2021.
- Jerry Burnaman insisted he had not told anyone about this detail.
- Tony Farrell lied to the State in reference to cleaning up the pond and by changing turbidity numbers of produced water.
- This week DEQ inspected the pond and stated no permit had been applied for. Mark McCarty, engineer with Meyer & Associates, stated that his firm prepared all the requisite application materials in 2024 and sent it to Tony Farrel who neglected to send it on to the Louisiana DEQ. EOM/Cenla took this problem over and has submitted the application. DEQ will not be issuing any fines.
- There is an ongoing criminal investigation into Tony Farrell's actions.
- The Sheriff has interviewed Jerry Burnaman who could not give information regarding tablets and PWA phones that Tony Farrell might have in his possession.
- MOTION by Carl Jeanise, seconded by Jerry Burnaman: Is an individual with this record in good standing and do they merit being considered a nominee for a PWA Board position? Yeas 0, Nays 5.

When the Board voted to sign the contract with EOM/Cenla, Charln Stewart had previously asked Jerry Burnaman what would be the conditions that would permit him to vote in favor. At the time Mr. Burnaman said that Tony Farrell had to be fired.

- When questioned about this response in a board meeting, Mr. Burnaman stated that he "...just wanted to see what they were going to say."

Jerry Burnaman asked why he wasn't included in a meeting with Rusty Reeves of Louisiana Rural Water Association.

- Charln Stewart stated that it was not a formal board meeting and that she wanted to learn what Mr. Reeves planned to say when he attended the next Board meeting.
- We had no idea who else Reeves was going to involve at the packed meeting which was pivotal in understanding the role of EOM/Cenla and the urgent needs of PWA.
- Conditions at the plant were dire and it was essential to set up a contract to address serious defects before a catastrophic failure occurs.

PATH FORWARD - To appreciate the importance of future attitudes and actions to ultimate success, the present dysfunction was reviewed.

- Workers at the plant are being intimidated and threatened by irate PWA members.
- Danette Miller pushed into plant facility and laid hands on William Dunham and later Charln Stewart. Sheriff's deputies were called and took no action.
- EOM/Cenla staff are being yelled at; told to go back to their former job; told they will be fired under a new regime.

- Gloria Thompson was screamed at by Don Gauthier in a public place just prior to this meeting.
- Larry Rice was assigned a Cease and Desist to prevent further lies being posted to social media.
- The Recall Petition was full of falsehoods that totally misrepresented the positive activities of the Board to keep PWA functioning.
- Some of the people who signed it were told it was a petition opposing sale of lake water to Texas by SRA.

The Board is innocent of falsehoods such as claims of taking money – or anything

- There is absolutely no compensation for the full-time work currently being performed by the President and VP.
- Gloria Thompson bought supplies for specific projects and will not accept any reimbursement.
- Carl Jeanise and Jerry Burnaman used their own equipment to do site work pro bono at the plant.

Charln Stewart asked Jerry Burnaman that, now that he has a clearer idea of the real problems at PWA, could he assure the Board that he will commit to being a cohesive member of the Board, share some true facts with acquaintances capable of listening, let the Board know what concerns the membership may have, and involve the Board in decisions that are needed so PWA can have some fruitful progress for everyone's benefit.

- Jerry Burnaman said that he can, and he asked for the same consideration of the other Board members.
- Jerry Burnaman said he did not have a part of the Recall Petition and that he didn't mind going to, and talking with people he knows would be open to a discussion.
- He said he wouldn't have signed the check to Tony Farrell if he had known what he knows today.

3. Election process

Nomination collection

- Mayor Hable will make the final pickup at the post office.
- Nomination forms must be postmarked by August 20, 2025.

Nomination review

- Nominees must be contacted and asked whether they want to be on the ballot
- They should be coached to provide a very brief bio phrase/sentence if they want it to appear on the ballot

Ballot example

- Instead of "vote" the ballot should read "Only one ballot per meter will be counted".
- Member name and account number should be on either side of the sheet, printed labels will suffice. If a blank ballot is picked up at the plant, the customer account number and name must be filled in.
- All acceptable ballots must be mailed to the Post Office box.
- Blank ballots will be made available at the plant, but no completed ballots can be dropped off there.
- Mail ballots to members by first week in September with a postmark due date no later than Sept 30. Counting ballots will be done October 7th or shortly after to allow time for mailed ballots to be collected.
- An accounting firm could be asked to do it, but we should be able to do it without paying for the service.
- MOTION by Gloria Thompson, seconded by Bub Sepulvado: A 3-person counting team could be made up of the Secretary, (Tony Laska), Mayor Hable, his representative or equivalent, and a non-member individual acceptable to the PWA activists. Yeas 5, Nays 0.

Path Forward with EOM/Cenla Operations contract

- A motion was made by Jerry Burnaman, seconded by Charln Stewart:
MOTION: The PWA Board will proceed with the current contract and continually monitor performance. A review will take place leading up to the one-year anniversary and, if it appears other options should be considered, we will do so at that time. Yeas 5, Nays 0.

4. Adjournment

- This closed meeting was adjourned at 10:58 am by acclamation.