



*Public Notice Pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.02*

## **ARIZONA MUNICIPAL WATER USERS ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **MEETING NOTICE AND AGENDA**

***December 19, 2024 – 11 AM***

**This meeting will be held as a Hybrid meeting.  
Attendance in person is welcomed; Others may join via Zoom.  
Access this [Link](#) to join via Zoom. Meeting ID: 889 7057 7007  
(Option to join by phone: 602-753-0140, same Meeting ID as above)**

- A. Call to Order**
- B. General Business—Items for Discussion and Possible Action**
- C. General Business—Items for Discussion and Possible Action**
  - 1. Approval of the Minutes from the November 21, 2024 Meeting
  - 2. Next Meeting Date: January 30, 2025
  - 3. 2025 Legislative Session and Potential Legislation
  - 4. Messaging the Municipal Perspective for the 2025 Legislative Session
  - 5. Post-2026 Colorado River Operational Guidelines
  - 6. Recommendation for 2025 AMWUA Board Officers
- C. Member Reports**
- D. Executive Director’s Report**
- E. Future Agenda Items**
- F. Adjournment**

\*The order of the agenda may be altered or changed by the AMWUA Board of Directors. Members of the AMWUA Board of Directors may attend in person or by internet conferencing.

More information about AMWUA public meetings is available online at [www.amwua.org/what-we-do/public-meetings](http://www.amwua.org/what-we-do/public-meetings), or by request.

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**Arizona Municipal Water Users Association**



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MEETING MINUTES  
November 21, 2024  
HYBRID MEETING**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Councilmember Sheri Lauritano, Goodyear, President  
Vice Mayor Scott Anderson, Gilbert, Vice President  
Councilmember Mark Freeman, Mesa, Secretary/Treasurer  
Councilmember Nikki Amberg, Tempe  
Councilmember Jennifer Crawford, Peoria  
Councilwoman Kesha Hodge Washington, Phoenix  
Mayor David Ortega, Scottsdale  
Councilmember Bart Turner, Glendale

**BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT**

Councilmember Curtis Nielson, Avondale  
Councilmember Matt Orlando, Chandler

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Barry Aarons, Aarons Co.	Angelica Gonzales, Tempe.
Michelle Barclay, AMWUA	Maegan Johnson, Phoenix
Brenda Burman, CAP	Warren Tenney, AMWUA
Paul Bergelin, AMWUA	Sheri Trapp, AMWUA
Cynthia Campbell, Phoenix	Theresa Ulmer, Ulmer
Harry Cooper, AMWUA	Consulting
Kathleen Ferris, AMWUA	Tammi Watson, CAP
Tyenesha Fields, AMWUA	Simone Williams, AMWUA

**A. Call to Order**

Councilmember Lauritano called the meeting to order at 11:01 a.m.

**B. General Business – Items for Discussion and Possible Action**

1. Approval of the Minutes from the November 21, 2024, Meeting

Upon a motion made by Councilmember Turner and a second from Councilmember Amberg, the AMWUA Board of Directors unanimously approved the November 21, 2024 meeting minutes.

2. Next Meeting Date: Thursday, January 23, 2025 – 11:00 a.m.

3. Update on Post-2026 Colorado River Operating Guidelines

Brenda Burman, General Manager of the Central Arizona Project, reported on the critical discussions surrounding the Colorado River's future amid prolonged drought conditions. She highlighted that the current 2007 guidelines, which govern water reductions and reservoir operations, are set to expire and have proven insufficient to address ongoing hydrologic challenges. Burman provided a historical overview of the 1922 Colorado River Compact, which divided water between the Upper Basin (Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, and New Mexico) and the Lower Basin (Arizona, California, and Nevada) at Lee Ferry, allocating 7.5 million acre-feet annually to each basin. She also explained additional provisions, such as the Lower Basin's entitlement to an extra million acre-feet and the shared responsibility for Mexico's water allocation.

Burman raised concerns over the Bureau of Reclamation's recent alternatives for post-2026 guidelines, which excluded mention of the 1922 Compact but focused reductions almost entirely on the Lower Basin. The Lower Basin states had proposed a compromise involving 1.5 million acre-feet in reductions, with Upper Basin collaboration if conditions worsened, but this was not included in the Bureau's analysis. Mayor Ortega inquired about the role of tribal nations in addressing water scarcity and whether AMWUA cities could acquire water through tribal provisions. Burman responded that the Bureau plans to account for unused tribal water but has not clarified what this means. She added that one proposed alternative includes no reductions for tribal water, which could disproportionately impact non-tribal CAP users since 46% of CAP water is tribal. She also noted that the impact varies depending on a tribe's water rights and agreements with the U.S. in times of shortage.

Kathy Ferris raised a question about the potential for changes in direction due to the new federal administration. Burman acknowledged that the transition could bring significant changes, as temporary leadership will be installed at the Bureau of Reclamation. She stated there is no insight into when a new Reclamation Commissioner might be nominated or whether this will follow the confirmation of the Secretary or Deputy Secretary of the Interior. She agreed that new leadership presents an opportunity for shifts in direction but also noted the uncertainty surrounding such transitions.

Burman stressed the importance of equitable reductions across both basins to ensure sustainable and legally compliant water management. She expressed concern over the Bureau's lack of Upper Basin obligations in its proposals, which has intensified uncertainty about the future of Colorado River negotiations. Burman concluded by noting that further details are anticipated at the Colorado River Water Users Association meeting and subsequent updates in December.

#### 4. 2025 Legislative Agenda

Mr. Tenney highlighted the key priorities proposed in the 2025 legislative agenda, which emphasize securing Arizona's water future. The agenda encourages legislators to understand the foundational role of water security in supporting communities and the economy. It advocates for investments in new water supplies, such as advanced purification systems and infrastructure expansion like Bartlett Dam. The agenda also supports legislation to protect the sustainability of groundwater resources, stabilize the Colorado River system, and enhance water efficiency and conservation practices. The agenda supports legislation to ensure the Arizona Department of Water Resources, and the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality are effective in meeting their statutory responsibilities.

Tenney noted that the legislative agenda had been reviewed with the InterGovs, the Water Resources Advisory Group, and the Management Board, which recommended its adoption. He concluded by emphasizing the need to stay prepared for diverse proposals and continue advocating for the water security that AMWUA members provide to their communities.

Barry Aaron provided an update on the Arizona Legislature following the election, noting the unchanged dynamics despite increased Republican majorities in the House and Senate. He highlighted the leadership appointments of Senator Warren Petersen and Speaker Steve Montenegro, and emphasized key figures in water policy, such as Senator T.J. Shope and Representative Gail Griffin. He shared optimism for the session, particularly with the Governor's Water Policy Council meeting on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, where the state will present its Ag-to-Urban proposal. This approach, which AMWUA supported, represents a strategic shift toward proactive engagement by ADWR, enabling AMWUA to support proposals instead of simply opposing them. Tenney concurred.

Councilmember Turner made the motion to approve the proposed 2025 legislative agenda, including the added reference to Bartlett Dam. Mayor Ortega seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion.

Councilmember Freeman raised concerns about the potential cuts in CAP water for their community and stressed the need for AMWUA to lead conversations with legislators about managing the impacts of such reductions. Tenney agreed, emphasizing that protecting water security is essential to Arizona's economy and that decisions must strengthen, not weaken, municipal water providers' capabilities. Both Aarons and Tenney stressed the need for collaboration and consensus in the legislative session, advocating for balanced approaches to water management.

#### 5. Agreement for Legal Consulting Services

Warren Tenney noted that Kathy Ferris, AMWUA's legal counsel of 36 years, will be stepping down at the end of the year. He expressed deep appreciation for her long-standing service and noted the organization's reluctance in beginning the search for her replacement. The search process, which included interviews with the Board, resulted in

the selection of Rhett Larson to provide legal consulting services moving forward. Tenney highlighted Larson's expertise, knowledge of water issues, and strong reputation in the water community as key factors in his selection.

Tenney reported that the agreement with Larson mirrors the current terms with Ferris, offering continuity and financial predictability. Under the agreement, Larson will provide up to 200 hours of consulting annually for a monthly retainer of \$5,000. To ensure a smooth transition, Larson's contract will begin on December 1<sup>st</sup>, overlapping with Ferris's final month.

Councilmember Anderson motioned for approval of Rhett Larson's agreement as AMWUA's legal counsel. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Turner. The Board unanimously approved the motion.

#### 6. First Quarter Fiscal Year 2025 Financial Report

Tenney highlighted that the financial statements included in the agenda packet show AMWUA is currently \$41,041 under the year-to-date budget. However, these savings are expected to decrease or be eliminated as open positions are filled. The Management Board has recommended accepting the financial statements.

We need to include the motion made to accept the financial statements

#### 7. Nominating Committee for Board Officers for 2025

Tenney explained that according to the bylaws, the Board of Directors must elect officers—President, Vice President, and Secretary-Treasurer—at the December meeting to serve for the full calendar year. Officers must have served on the current board for at least 12 months, be able to serve for one year, and can serve a maximum of two consecutive years in the same position and six consecutive years as an officer.

Councilmember Lauritano appointed herself, Councilmember Turner, and Councilmember Amberg as the nominating committee to recommend a slate of officers. Interested Board members should send their letter of interest to the Executive Director by December 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **C. Executive Director's Report**

Mr. Tenney reported that the WIFA Board approved a solicitation for the Long-Term Water Augmentation Fund, launching a competitive process to identify sustainable water projects for State investment. This initiative is crucial for securing Arizona's long-term water resources.

Mr. Tenney noted AMWUA was honored by the Arizona Nursery Association with the Board of Directors Award for updating the *Landscape Plants for the Arizona Desert* publication, which in its various forms has significantly advanced conservation ethics and outdoor water use practices in Arizona.

Regarding staff, Tenney said that AMWUA welcomed Simone Williams as the new Water Policy Analyst, bringing over 20 years of experience. However, Harry Cooper, the Conservation Coordinator, is leaving to join ASU as Director of Water Conservation Innovation, following the recent departure of Jacob Perez Laurent to ASU as well. AMWUA will use these transitions as an opportunity to reassess AMWUA's demand management and conservation strategies.

Mr. Tenney shared about visiting the Tokyo Metropolitan Waterworks Museum. His report included historical context, engineering challenges, and the city's old and modern approach to water quality management and supply.

#### **D. Future Agenda Items**

No future agenda items were requested.

#### **E. Adjournment**

Councilmember Lauritano adjourned the meeting at 12:33 p.m.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**INFORMATION SUMMARY**  
**December 19, 2024**

## 2025 Legislative Session and Potential Legislation

### ANNUAL PLAN REFERENCE

#### Legislation

Effectively advocate with one voice at the Legislature.

- Monitor, analyze and clarify state and federal legislation of interest to our members.
- Engage with legislators to inform them about the issues important to AMWUA including identifying and working with legislators to champion water issues.

*Strategic Plan: Collaborate and Advocate for Solutions, Safeguard Water Supplies, Reinforce Groundwater Management, Prepare for Impacts of Drought & Shortage, Pursue Post-2025 Water Policy*

### SUMMARY

The 2025 legislative session will begin on January 13, 2025. It is anticipated that water will continue to be a key focus of the Legislature.

At the December 2, 2024, meeting of the Governor’s Water Policy Council, ADWR introduced the State’s proposal for the Ag-to-Urban concept. ADWR stated that this concept was worth pursuing because it could reduce groundwater pumping if done correctly. To that end, ADWR discussed seven “guardrails” that would be necessary for this concept, which include limiting this program’s scope of agricultural lands within a Designated provider’s service area, requiring 3/5 years of past use, requiring additional conservation measures on any converted acreage, and sunseting the program after a certain period of time. There are other guardrails, such as the conversion rate and portability of groundwater, that ADWR is still refining. ADWR said it intends to have a broad stakeholder process, including additional Council meetings, to develop the final Ag-to-Urban proposal which would then be adopted through a rulemaking process. Rep. Griffin responded that she would pursue this concept through legislation.

Also, ADEQ is expected to introduce legislation regarding its oversight in the treatment process for Advanced Water Purification. CAWCD is considering legislation to modify how it calculates CAGR’s annual membership dues to maintain their stability and equity. We anticipate that the Homebuilders Association of Central Arizona will introduce legislation to work around the new ADAWS rules and the Phoenix AMA groundwater model.

AMWUA staff will provide an overview about these issues.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is requested that the AMWUA Management Board ask questions and discuss potential water legislation for the 2025 legislative session.



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**INFORMATION SUMMARY**  
December 19, 2024

## Messaging the Municipal Perspective for the 2025 Legislative Session

### ANNUAL PLAN REFERENCE

#### Legislation

Effectively advocate with one voice at the Legislature.

- Engage with legislators to inform them about the issues important to AMWUA including identifying and working with legislators to champion water issues.

*Strategic Plan: Collaborate and Advocate for Solutions, Safeguard Water Supplies, Reinforce Groundwater Management, Prepare for Impacts of Drought & Shortage, Pursue Post-2025 Water Policy*

#### Enhanced Communication

Advance how AMWUA conveys the municipal perspective on water, stays in front of water issues, and better communicates and personalizes the impact to the average citizen.

- Engage with regional partners, agencies, and media to facilitate the coordination of consistent messaging to educate the public and decision-makers on a variety of topics, including the implications of reduced Colorado River water and groundwater challenges.

*Strategic Plan: Educate – Facilitate our Strength in Numbers, Excel as an Expert and Resource, Collaborate and Advocate for Solutions, Prepare for Impacts of Drought & Shortage, Interconnect Disciplines*

### SUMMARY

We anticipate another active legislative session for water due to the unmet demand projected in the Phoenix AMA groundwater model, rural groundwater management, and the anticipated reduction in Arizona's Colorado River allotment after 2026. In preparation for the session, we have sought to elevate the importance of water security so that state leaders prioritize actions that support, not harm, the AMWUA cities' ability to deliver water to 3.7 million residents and businesses critical to the national economy. AMWUA staff would like to review messaging that has been developed to convey to Legislators the importance of legislation that upholds the water security AMWUA's members provide. This messaging is consistent with the 2025 legislative agenda that was adopted last month by the AMWUA Board of Directors.

The key audience for this messaging is legislators, so we have worked to keep the language straightforward and concise. As we did with our previous Colorado River Shortage Awareness Campaign, the messaging is to provide key points on which we can be consistent and coordinated as we work with the Legislature. We received productive input and feedback from the InterGovs and the Water Resources Advisory Group.

The first attachment is the brief on water security, which serves as our umbrella message. The second attachment is an example of additional fact sheets that provide additional information. The second attachment is specifically about the anticipated reductions to Colorado River water and why it matters. AMWUA staff is developing additional fact sheets about the implication of reduced groundwater availability, Advanced Water Purification, and the expansion of Bartlett Dam.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is requested that the AMWUA Management Board ask questions and discuss the messaging to convey the municipal perspective on water to the Legislature.

*Attachment – Water Security Brief*

*Attachment – Water Security and Colorado River Fact Sheet*

## **WATER SECURITY**

### **THE BEDROCK OF OUR THRIVING COMMUNITIES AND THE LIFEBLOOD OF OUR ECONOMY**

#### **WHAT IS WATER SECURITY?**

The assurance that residents and businesses have access to clean, reliable water. This is the direct result of the AMWUA cities' planning and investment of billions of dollars in their water resources and infrastructure.

#### **WHY WATER SECURITY MATTERS**

- It is the foundation of our thriving economy and vibrant communities.
- It gives residents and businesses the confidence to make Arizona their permanent home.

#### **THE CHALLENGES**

Arizona is facing converging water challenges that threaten its water security.

- The AMWUA cities have spent billions of dollars to utilize surface water sources and significantly reduce their groundwater pumping. However, their supply of Colorado River water will decrease after 2026, when new cuts will be established.
- Cities will need to offset those anticipated reductions to Colorado River water.
- The Phoenix-area aquifer is stressed and cannot support additional groundwater pumping. Failure to protect the aquifer will jeopardize the ability of the AMWUA cities to meet the water needs of their communities.

#### **THE SOLUTIONS**

Our water challenges require prudent solutions.

- Arizona must prioritize developing and investing in new water supplies to ensure long-term water security. This includes supporting immediate projects like Advanced Water Purification and expanding Bartlett Dam.
- Protect our stressed aquifers to ensure the sustainability of limited groundwater.

#### **KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- The water security we provide is vital for Arizona's resilience and economic prosperity.
- Water security requires a continuous commitment to planning and investment.
- State leaders and municipal water providers must work together on policies that protect our water security.

*The ten AMWUA municipalities serve 3.7 million residents, over half of Arizona's population, but use just 11 percent of the state's water. This accomplishment results from careful planning and purposeful investments, ensuring Arizona's water security.*

## Colorado River and Water Security

### Arizona will have less Colorado River water after 2026.

- The river is producing less water due to drier and warmer conditions in the basin, which are reducing runoff from snowpack.
- In the last century, the river was allocated to deliver 16.5 million acre-feet among the seven Colorado River Basin States and Mexico. However, the river is now only producing 12.4 million acre-feet and could decline by an additional 20%.
- The federal government must adopt new guidelines before 2027 on how to distribute shortages among the seven Colorado River Basin states.
- The exact reductions to the Central Arizona Project (CAP) are unknown, but the cuts to water providers and tribes are anticipated to be at least 20%.

### Why does this matter to the AMWUA cities, and why you should care?

- Over the past four decades, the AMWUA cities have made significant investments to use surface water sources, including the Colorado River. These efforts provided the water security to build a thriving economy while considerably reducing their groundwater reliance.
- Now, these providers will need to find ways to offset Colorado River reductions, which will require new investments.
- Due to their unique water supply portfolios, these cuts will impact each water provider differently.
- To compensate for Colorado River reductions, municipal providers may need to recover water stored underground and pump groundwater set aside in their assured water supply designations.
- The AMWUA cities are vigilant about protecting our stressed and limited aquifers because allowing new users to pump groundwater will compromise their ability to serve existing residents.

### Takeaways:

- If CAP deliveries to cities are cut to zero or one water provider has difficulty meeting its communities' water demands, Arizona's economy would be severely threatened.
- The uncertainty surrounding the Colorado River requires wise decisions and solutions to safeguard our water security for present and future generations.
- Investing in new water supplies, such as Advanced Water Purification and the expansion of Bartlett Dam, is critical to meeting Arizona's current and future demands.

*The ten AMWUA municipalities serve 3.7 million residents, over half of Arizona's population, but use just 11 percent of the state's water. This accomplishment results from careful planning and purposeful investments, ensuring Arizona's water security.*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### INFORMATION SUMMARY

December 19, 2024

# Post-2026 Colorado River Operating Guidelines

## ANNUAL PLAN REFERENCE

### Colorado River Transition

Assist, monitor, and coordinate the impacts of reduced Colorado River water to ensure our members' interests are forefront.

*Strategic Plan: Facilitate our Strength in Numbers, Collaborate and Advocate for Solutions, Safeguard Water Supplies, Prepare for Impacts of Drought & Shortage, Minimize Financial Impact*

## SUMMARY

On November 20<sup>th</sup>, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) released short descriptions of the five alternatives it plans analyze further as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for developing the post-2026 Colorado River guidelines. None of these alternatives matched those that were submitted to Reclamation. Instead, Reclamation selected different components of the alternatives and concepts it received and combined those together to form these five alternatives. The intention seems to be to provide a broad range of analysis for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Notably, Reclamation did not identify a preferred alternative. Reclamation plans to provide additional information on the alternatives at this month's Colorado River Water Users Association meeting in Las Vegas and to release a more detailed report later this month.

Although it is difficult to determine the implications of each alternative, one concern is that they still place most of the reductions on the Lower Basin, which could jeopardize deliveries to the CAP. The CAWCD Board held a special meeting on Monday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> to pass a resolution calling on Reclamation to analyze compliance with the Colorado River Compact as part of its NEPA analysis and to analyze the Lower Basin alternative as part of the NEPA process.

AMWUA staff will provide an update on alternatives released Colorado River negotiations and additional information on the NEPA process.

## RECOMMENDATION

The AMWUA Management Board is requested to ask questions and discuss the Colorado River negotiations.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**INFORMATION SUMMARY**  
**December 19, 2024**

## **Recommendation for 2025 AMWUA Board Officers**

### **ANNUAL PLAN REFERENCE**

#### **Day-to-Day Operations**

Maintain the daily operations of an effective organization and the services members rely on.

- AMWUA will continue to serve its members through collaborating on issues and advocating for the agreed-upon positions. Regular meetings of the AMWUA Board of Directors will be used to facilitate such collaboration.

*Strategic Plan: Facilitate our Strength in Numbers, Educate - Excel as an Expert and Resource*

### **SUMMARY**

Pursuant to the AMWUA Bylaws, the Board President, Councilmember Sheri Lauritano of Goodyear appointed Councilmember Amberg of Tempe, Councilmember Bart Turner of Glendale, and herself to serve as members of the Nominating Committee to recommend a President, Vice President, and Secretary-Treasurer for the AMWUA Board of Directors for calendar year 2025.

According to the AMWUA Bylaws, the officers are to each have served on the current Board of Directors at least from January 2024 through December 2024. Each officer is to be able to serve for a one-year period, and may serve a minimum of one year and a maximum of two consecutive years in the same position.

The Nominating Committee will provide its recommendations for the Board Officers at the December 19, 2024 meeting.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The AMWUA Board of Directors is to consider approving the Nominating Committee's recommendation for President, Vice President, and Secretary-Treasurer for the AMWUA Board of Directors for calendar year 2025.

*Suggested Motion: I move that the AMWUA Board of Directors accept the recommended slate of AMWUA officers for calendar year 2025.*