



# KLSWA ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

March 16, 2026

TO: Kalamazoo Lake Sewer & Water Authority Board Members

FROM: Robert Miller, Administrator

## 1. A New Opportunity

First, my gratitude is owed to the Board members of the KLSWA, local leaders, and other stakeholders who granted me the opportunity to work alongside each of them. In only my first few weeks, I've learned much about all the ways this organization has served the community well, and have really tried to focus my attention on not letting any of these past accomplishments and processes become overlooked..

Next, my thanks are also due to the KLSWA staff that, having just met me, have been nothing but supportive, helpful, and focused on the continued safe and compliant operation of the water and sewer utilities. Everyone right now is doing more, accepting more responsibility, spending more time, and working more weekends than what may have been previously asked of them under different circumstances. Everyone is positive and invested in the continued success of our organization. I look forward to growing with this team serving as the foundation.

## 2. Connecting with Our Partners

**City of Douglas** – I was invited by Douglas Manager, Lisa Nocerini, for an opportunity to meet members of the Douglas team and briefly discuss the partnership with KLSWA. I was fortunate to be able to sit down with Manager Nocerini, Councilman Balmer, Public Works Supervisor Salinas, Project Manager Pearson, P&Z Administrator Homyen, Councilwoman/KLSWA Ludwick, and Councilman/KLSWA Freeman. I look forward to working with this team

**The City of Saugatuck** – I was able to attend March 9 Regular Meeting of the Saugatuck City Council. I was given the opportunity to introduce myself during the meeting, and was able to briefly speak with City Manager Cummins, Mayor Anderson, Allegan County Commissioner Lubbers, and Saugatuck DPW Superintendent Herbert. On a separate occasion, I was provided with an introduction to Chief Janik, members of his team, and a very informative tour of his facility and the Saugatuck Township Fire District operation.

**Fleis & VandenBrink** – F&V are key partners of the KLSWA and I have been able to meet with different members of their team, onsite, on several separate occasions regarding many different projects.

I've met with F&V Engineer Steve Bishop, longtime Engineer of Record for KLSWA, regarding Capital Improvement Plans, asset management planning, and a proposed system-wide sewer capacity study.

I've met with Corey Turner, Project Manager from F&V, regarding an ongoing Clean Water State Revolving Fund application and project plan. This project, totaling over \$5M worth of capital improvements and repairs to the Authority-owned wastewater treatment assets, will be funded with a low interest Clean Water State Revolving Fund loan. At this point, we've been awarded funding, project design is in the early stages, and the

Agreement for service between KLSWA and F&V is being finalized. It's possible we may see site work starting late this year, but it will more likely begin in the Spring of 2027.

Abul Ahmed, from the F&V Operations Group, has been joining us onsite each Friday. Abul is acting as the State's designated Operator-In-Charge (OIC) for KLSWA's drinking water production and distribution systems. Currently, Abul is responsible for compliance reporting related to flows, chemical feeds and dosing, bacteriological analysis, and other State/Federal mandated QA/QC. Considering both Shawn Sisson and I are both adequately licensed to act as OIC for both production and distribution, It would be my intent for KLSWA staff to pull back this responsibility in the coming months.

Most recently, I met onsite with Stephen Dehring and Olivia Smith from F&V's environmental group. That team is working on finishing up a compliance plan for an underground storage tank that was removed from our site years ago. The F&V team, along with KLSWA staff collected groundwater samples to be analyzed for the presence of any dangerous contaminants that may have leaked from the tank. These results will be reported to the State when available, and the project will be closed-out.

Following work and discussion on the tank mitigation, we transitioned to updating KLSWA's Risk and Resiliency Study. This is a document required by the USEPA that requires system owner/operators to consider different categories and levels of risk that face our utility, and what controls we have in place to remain resilient. F&V has been contracted to provide us with this service. EPA requires that we submit an updated document by June 30 of this year.

**Prein & Newhof** – working on behalf of Saugatuck Township and City of The Village of Douglas, I have been in frequent contact with Tyler DeNooyer as we work to locate and identify the material make-up of several water service lines.

**State of Michigan** – I've made introductions to several of our partners with State's Department of Energy, Great Lakes, and the Environment (EGLE). On the drinking water side, I've been in communication with Stacey Wilson and Chunyan He from the Kalamazoo District Office with regards to compliance reporting and water operations. Stacey and Chunyan are our primary oversight personnel. They are aware of our staffing transition, and KLSWA's intent to reassume OIC responsibilities in the near term.

On the wastewater side, I also made contact with our Kalamazoo-based regulators to send a similar message. We were fortunate to have already had an onsite meeting with Jeremy Rubio, EGLE oversight official, to discuss current wastewater regulatory requirements, ensure compliance, ask questions, and to discuss our staff transition.

Currently, required regulatory reporting for the day to day operation of both the drinking water and wastewater systems is in full compliance.

**Mika Meyers, PLC** – I've quickly gotten to know the team at Mika Meyer that supports our mission in the areas of hiring/HR, labor law, contract review, and several other areas of general counsel.

### 3. Operations

**Monthly Operations Report** – Please see supplemental report provided by Shawn Sisson

Additionally, I have been able to spend a fair amount of time in the field with the operations staff. My initial impression of the assets in the field is that they, generally speaking, are in good condition, well maintained, and repair needs are being addressed as necessary and practical. Both the water and wastewater systems are being run by capable and qualified staff with the proper experience and certifications.

In the coming weeks, I hope to shift more of my time to more meaningful operational training in the field. This will allow me to better manage the team, and to serve in the operator's role if the situation ever calls for it.

## 4. Administration

Our front office has been extraordinarily productive and personally helpful to me during my “New Hire” experience, despite some very consequential staffing transitions. Our current Office Supervisor is handling all frontline customer service functions, receipting, AP, payroll, HR tasks, etc., and has still made himself available to me whenever asked. Having elected to skip the February billing cycle, we are back on track for March. Tasks are being prioritized, and though there is a backlog, we’re optimistic that this won’t be insurmountable once a new Administrative Assistant is brought on.

## 5. Hiring

Based on FY 2027 budgets and previous discussions of the KLSWA Board, below are current vacancies and status on each:

**Office Administrative Assistant** – this position was previously advertised in the local newspaper. We have so far interviewed three candidates and are tentatively planning to make an offer as soon as we can complete some administrative prerequisites.

**System Operator I and/or II** – this position was also previously advertised in the local newspaper, on Michigan Municipal League’s website, and on Indeed. Several applications with varying degrees of qualifications and experience were received prior to my arrival. We have at least one, potentially more strong candidates. Before setting up interviews, we have a few questions on our end to answer with regards to job descriptions, terms of employment, and general hiring practices.

**Operations Supervisor** – Engaging in initial conversations with staff

**Chief Financial Officer/Director of Finance** – No steps have been formally taken yet. In the near term, I hope to be able to thoroughly evaluate the needs of our organization, and compare and contrast my ideas with what similar organizations/municipalities are doing to address these needs. I hope to engage the KLSWA Board, staff, and other industry partners on this discussion.

## 6. Conclusion

As this is my first official means of reporting out to the Board, I wish to conclude by requesting any and all input and feedback as to what you may, or may not want to have included in this report. I look forward to hearing from you, and to providing a better, more informative, and more relevant report each month.

**Out of Office Reminder** – Please remember that I will be out of the office from April 6-10.