# CITY OF WALHALLA, SOUTH CAROLINA

## WALHALLA WATER CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

### BYLAWS

## ARTICLE I — NAME

The name of this body shall be the **Walhalla Water Citizens Advisory Board**, hereinafter referred to as the "Board."

The Board is established by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Walhalla, South Carolina, hereinafter referred to as the "City Council."

## ARTICLE II — MISSION

The mission of the Walhalla Water Citizens Advisory Board is to strengthen communication between the City of Walhalla, and the citizens and customers served by the City's water system.

The Board shall provide meaningful opportunities for water customers to share perspectives, identify concerns, provide community insight, and make constructive recommendations concerning water service improvements, advancements, challenges, and future needs.

The Board shall serve as an advisory resource to the Mayor, City Council, City Administrator, and Water Department.

## ARTICLE III — PURPOSE

The purpose of the Board is to:

1. Provide citizen input regarding water-related projects, improvements, upgrades, services, concerns, and challenges.
2. Provide recommendations and community perspectives to the Mayor, City Council, City Administrator, and Water Department.
3. Strengthen communication between the City and customers of the Walhalla water system, including customers residing both inside and outside the City limits.
4. Provide an additional avenue for citizens to communicate water-service concerns and ideas to City officials.
5. Assist the City in identifying community needs and perspectives as it evaluates current and future water-system improvements and priorities.
6. Promote constructive communication, transparency, and community engagement regarding the City's water services.

## ARTICLE IV — RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board may be asked by the Mayor, City Council, City Administrator, Water Department, or the City's Public Utilities Committee to:

1. Provide recommendations on water-related issues, concerns, projects, and improvements to the Mayor and City Council.
2. Offer community input regarding water services, water-system planning, service improvements, and long-term water-system needs.
3. Review information provided by City staff, water professionals, consultants, engineers, or other qualified individuals regarding water-related matters.
4. Provide citizen perspectives concerning proposed water projects, upgrades, improvements, or other matters referred to the Board.
5. Identify community concerns and communicate those concerns to appropriate City officials.
6. Assist in strengthening communication between water customers and City officials.
7. Consider other water-related matters referred to the Board by the Mayor, City Council, City Administrator, Water Department, or Public Utilities Committee.

The Board shall focus its work on providing constructive citizen input and recommendations. The Board shall not be responsible for the day-to-day administration or operation of the City's water system.

## ARTICLE V — AUTHORITY

The Board is **strictly advisory**.

The Board shall not:

1. Make binding decisions on behalf of the City.
2. Approve, authorize, or commit City expenditures.
3. Approve contracts, purchases, or agreements on behalf of the City.
4. Set, establish, modify, or approve water rates, fees, or charges.
5. Direct City employees, Water Department personnel, or other City staff.
6. Direct or manage Water Department operations.
7. Exercise any authority granted by law to the Mayor, City Council, City Administrator, Water Department, or other authorized City body or official.
8. Represent that a recommendation or statement made by the Board constitutes an official action or decision of the City.

Recommendations of the Board shall be advisory only and shall be forwarded to the appropriate City official or body for consideration.

Nothing contained in these bylaws shall limit or supersede any authority granted by state law, local ordinance, or other applicable law to the Mayor, City Council, City Administrator, Water Department, or any other duly authorized City official or body.

## ARTICLE VI — MEMBERSHIP

The Board shall consist of the following members:

1. **County Council District Representatives:**
   One citizen representative from each Oconee County Council district who:
   - Resides outside the Walhalla City limits;
   - Resides within the County Council district being represented; and
   - Is served by the Walhalla water system.
2. **City Representatives:**
   Three citizens who reside within the Walhalla City limits and are customers of the Walhalla water system.
3. **City Staff Members:**
   The City Administrator and the Water Department Director shall serve as members of the Board.
4. **Presiding Official:**
   The Mayor or Chair of the City's Public Utilities Committee or their designee shall preside over meetings. When not presiding over meetings, these elected officials (Mayor or Chair of the City's Public Utilities Committee) shall serve as ex-officio members of the board

Citizen members shall serve in a non-voting advisory capacity.

The City Administrator and Water Department Director shall participate as City staff representatives and resources to the Board. Their participation shall not change the advisory nature of the Board.

## ARTICLE VII — QUALIFICATIONS FOR CITIZEN MEMBERS

All citizen members shall:

1. Be eligible to serve on City boards and commissions under applicable City requirements.
2. Be a current customer of the Walhalla water system and be in good standing.
3. Meet the residency requirements established for the position to which they are appointed.
4. For County Council district representatives, reside within the County Council district they represent.
5. For City representatives, reside within the Walhalla City limits.
6. Complete the City's established Boards and Commissions application process.

A "customer in good standing" shall mean a customer whose water account is maintained in accordance with the City's applicable utility policies and requirements.

## ARTICLE VIII — APPOINTMENT AND SELECTION

Citizen members shall be appointed by the Mayor and City Council in accordance with applicable City procedures.

Applicants shall use the City's existing Boards and Commissions application process.

Applicants must meet the City's requirements for board and commission service and must reside in the County Council district they represent when applying for a district representative position.

The City shall review applications to determine whether applicants meet the qualifications for the position for which they are applying.

The Mayor and City Council may consider qualifications, residency, representation of the applicable district or geographic area, community involvement, and other factors relevant to the advisory responsibilities of the Board.

Appointment to the Board does not create a right to continued service beyond the member's appointed term.

## ARTICLE IX — TERMS OF SERVICE

Citizen members shall serve **one-year terms**.

At the conclusion of each one-year term, the Mayor and City Council shall have the authority to:

1. Reappoint the member for an additional one-year term;
2. Appoint another qualified citizen to the position;
3. Review the membership and determine whether the position should be continued, modified, or otherwise addressed; or
4. Take such other action as permitted by applicable law and City policy.

There shall be **no automatic right to reappointment**.

A member may be reappointed for successive one-year terms unless the Mayor and City Council determine otherwise.

The one-year term structure is intended to provide an opportunity for regular review of Board membership, participation, representation, and effectiveness.

## ARTICLE X — VACANCIES

A vacancy shall occur upon resignation, death, removal, loss of eligibility, or other circumstance that causes a member to no longer be qualified to serve.

A citizen member may resign by providing written notice to the Mayor, City Administrator, or City Clerk.

The Mayor and City Council shall appoint a qualified individual to fill any vacancy.

Unless otherwise determined by the Mayor and City Council, a person appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term.

## ARTICLE XI — REMOVAL FROM THE BOARD

The Mayor and City Council may remove a citizen member from the Board, subject to applicable law and City policy.

Grounds for removal may include, but are not limited to:

1. Loss of eligibility or residency requirements;
2. No longer being a customer of the Walhalla water system;
3. Failure to maintain an account in good standing;
4. Excessive or repeated absences from meetings;
5. Conduct that materially interferes with the Board's ability to perform its advisory responsibilities; or
6. Other circumstances determined by the Mayor and City Council to warrant removal.

## ARTICLE XII — OFFICERS AND PRESIDING OFFICIAL

The Mayor or the Chair of the City's Public Utilities Committee or their designate shall preside over meetings of the Board.

The Chair shall:

1. Call meetings to order;
2. Preside over discussion and maintain orderly proceedings;
3. Recognize members and participants wishing to speak;
4. Facilitate consideration of agenda items;
5. Assist in establishing meeting agendas in coordination with City staff; and
6. Perform other duties reasonably necessary to conduct Board meetings.

The Chair shall not have a vote as a citizen member because citizen members serve in a non-voting advisory capacity.

The City may designate appropriate staff to assist with meeting administration, agendas, minutes, notices, and other administrative responsibilities.

## ARTICLE XIII — MEETINGS

The Board shall meet **at least quarterly**.

Additional meetings may be scheduled when needed, particularly when a water-related issue, project, service concern, planning matter, or other matter requires citizen input.

Meetings may be called by the Chair, in coordination with City staff, or as otherwise directed or requested by the Mayor, City Council, City Administrator, Water Department, or Public Utilities Committee.

Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with all applicable City policies, ordinances, and state laws governing public meetings, public notice, public participation, and public records.

The City shall provide public notice of meetings as required by applicable law and City policy.

## ARTICLE XIV — QUORUM AND PARTICIPATION

Because citizen members serve in a non-voting advisory capacity, the Board's discussions and recommendations shall be advisory and shall not constitute formal legislative or administrative action by the City.

A quorum for purposes of conducting Board business shall be established in accordance with applicable City policy or, if no specific policy applies, by the presence of a majority of the appointed citizen membership.

The Board may continue to receive information and conduct discussion when a quorum is not present; however, formal recommendations should not be adopted unless the applicable quorum requirements are satisfied.

## ARTICLE XV — RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board may develop recommendations concerning matters within its purpose and responsibilities.

Recommendations may be forwarded to:

- The Mayor;
- City Council;
- The City Administrator;
- The Water Department Director;
- The Public Utilities Committee; or
- Another appropriate City department, committee, or official.

Recommendations should, when appropriate, be documented in the Board's meeting minutes or in written communication submitted to the appropriate City official or body.

Recommendations of the Board shall not bind the City or require action by the Mayor, City Council, City Administrator, or Water Department.

## ARTICLE XVI — PUBLIC INPUT

The Board may provide opportunities for members of the public and water customers to address the Board regarding matters within the Board's purpose.

Public participation shall be conducted in accordance with applicable City policies and procedures.

The Board may establish reasonable procedures for public comments to ensure that meetings are conducted in an orderly and productive manner.

## ARTICLE XVII — ATTENDANCE

Members are expected to attend regularly scheduled meetings and participate constructively in Board activities.

If a citizen member is unable to attend a meeting, the member should notify the City or designated staff representative when reasonably possible.

Repeated absences may be considered by the Mayor and City Council when reviewing a member for reappointment or continued service.

## ARTICLE XVIII — CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Board members shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws concerning conflicts of interest and ethical conduct.

Members shall disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest involving a matter being considered by the Board and shall comply with applicable requirements concerning participation in such matters.

## ARTICLE XIX — COMMITTEES AND WORK GROUPS

The Board may recommend the creation of temporary work groups or subcommittees to study specific water-related matters.

Any committee or work group shall operate within the authority granted by the Board and shall not exercise independent authority on behalf of the City.

Any committee or work group shall comply with applicable laws and City policies, including open-meeting requirements where applicable.

## ARTICLE XX — RECORDS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Board records, meeting minutes, recommendations, correspondence, and other official documents shall be maintained in accordance with applicable City policies and South Carolina law.

Board meetings, records, and communications shall comply with all applicable public meeting and public records requirements.

Official communications of the Board shall be made through procedures established by the City.

Individual Board members shall not represent personal opinions as official positions of the City or Board unless specifically authorized to do so.

## ARTICLE XXI — COMPENSATION

Citizen members shall serve without compensation unless otherwise authorized by the Mayor and City Council and permitted by applicable law.

## ARTICLE XXII — IMPLEMENTATION

Upon approval of the Board's creation by the Mayor and City Council, implementation shall generally proceed as follows:

1. **Creation of the Board:**
   The Mayor and City Council shall approve the creation of the Walhalla Water Citizens Advisory Board.
2. **Bylaws and Appointment Process:**
   City staff shall develop and maintain the basic bylaws, application procedures, and appointment process for the Board, subject to approval by the Mayor and City Council where required.
3. **Applications:**
   Applications for citizen membership shall be accepted through the City's existing Boards and Commissions application process.
4. **Appointment of Members:**
   The Mayor and City Council shall review qualified applicants and appoint citizen members in accordance with these bylaws and applicable City procedures.
5. **Orientation:**
   Newly appointed members shall receive a brief orientation from the City Administrator and Water Department regarding the City's water system, the Board's advisory role, applicable City procedures, and relevant responsibilities.
6. **Commencement of Meetings:**
   The Board shall begin meeting in accordance with these bylaws and may be convened to

consider water-related matters referred to it by the Mayor, City Council, City Administrator, Water Department, or Public Utilities Committee.

## ARTICLE XXIII — ANNUAL REVIEW

The Board's membership, purpose, activities, and effectiveness may be reviewed by the Mayor and City Council on an annual basis.

Such review may occur in conjunction with the expiration and consideration of citizen member terms.

The annual review may consider:

1. Board attendance and participation;
2. Geographic and customer representation;
3. Issues considered by the Board;
4. Recommendations provided to the City;
5. Communication between the Board, citizens, and City officials;
6. The continuing need for the Board; and
7. Any recommended changes to the Board's structure, responsibilities, or membership.

The annual review does not require the City Council to continue with the Board, reappoint any individual member, or maintain the Board in its existing form.

## ARTICLE XXIV — AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be amended by the Mayor and City Council.

The Board may recommend amendments to these bylaws and forward such recommendations to the Mayor and City Council for consideration.

No amendment shall become effective unless approved in accordance with applicable City procedures.

## ARTICLE XXV — EFFECTIVE DATE

These bylaws shall become effective upon approval by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Walhalla, South Carolina.

**Approved by the Walhalla City Council on:** _____

**Effective Date:** _____

**Mayor:** _____

**City Clerk:** _____