

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING  
ACADEMY WATER AND SANITATION DISTRICT  
<https://www.academywsdco.gov/>  
September 26, 2024**

All participation in this public meeting, including public participation, in conformance with state orders. This meeting was held in the Academy Water District Admin. Building, 1755 Spring Valley Road.

**ATTENDEES:**

(X) Steve Callicott            President  
(X) Loring Wirbel            Secretary  
(X) Ronald Curry            Director/Webmaster  
(X) Guest – Kindra Brewer, Cybersecurity Advisor, U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

**CALL TO ORDER: 1:25 p.m.**

Brewer provides information to utility districts on the security of their IT services and online presence. Her associate, Eugene Wade, is a protective physical security advisor with CISA, and will be providing AWSO at a later date with advice on physical security parameters at the main plant and remote facilities.

Brewer began by emphasizing that CISA, an agency within the Department of Homeland Security, is not a regulatory or auditing agency, it only provides advice for utility districts. This advice can include web application scanning and operator best practices for IT. She said hacks can range from large hacking gangs to “persistent threats” of state actors. While many districts perceive that national actors would only target large utility districts or hospitals, she said that such agencies and criminal gangs can look for vulnerabilities with even the smallest districts.

Steve described how laptop-based applications provide insight into the pumping at lift stations, and indicate sewage pumping and levels. There are remote PLCs (programmable logic controllers) at each site, but visibility is from a single screen. Alarms are provided if a person tries to enter lift station.

Water treatment and the control for the treatment all takes place within the plant, with embedded PLCs next to the Motor Control Center. Supplies of chlorine and soda ash are kept on site. Steve said that Mountain Peak Controls will be installing a master display panel to more easily control water treatment itself. Brewer said that it is good to have few IT layers between monitoring and physical management, because that represents fewer places that can be hacked. Steve said that treated water is pumped to a booster system, and Brewer said it is important to identify what a hacked booster might look like.

SCADA information is provided via a single box at the plant, with Internet service provided by CenturyLink. There also is backup cellular service for the information. Steve said that the biggest current concern is a lack of outdoor cameras and physical protection for external PLCs, and Brewer said that this is where Eugene Wade can give advice.

Steve described the transition from Badger to radio-based Neptune meters. Brewer said the transition to radio-based meter reading is not troublesome in and of itself, if radio network is secure. The bigger issue is who looks at customer data, and are they doing it on dedicated computers or a dedicated subsystem not linked to private Internet accounts. Steve said only the operations manager and the

accounting firm have aggregated data on customers, and that data contains little that is not in the public record. Board members can see some data fields by logging into the Neptune Software web site. Brewer said that we should ascertain how secure the Neptune site is, and also check on the security of the accountants' online payment system for customers choosing to pay by debit or credit.

**ADJOURNMENT: 2:23 p.m.**