

**West Virginia Board of Public Works
Monday, September 29, 2025 – 11:00 a.m.
Governor's Cabinet and Conference Room
Minutes**

Attendees:

Members

Patrick Morrissey, Governor
Kris Warner, Secretary of State
Kent Leonhardt, Commissioner of Agriculture
Michele Blatt, State Superintendent of Schools
Larry Pack, State Treasurer
Mark Hunt, State Auditor
Jace Goins for Attorney General J. B. McCuskey

Guests

Sarah Runyon, Division of Highways
Charles Hall, Division of Highways
Matthew Irby, Commissioner, State Tax Department
Deanna Sheets, State Tax Department
Ting Zhu, State Tax Department
Cassandra Means-Moore, Attorney General's Office
John Willems, Attorney General's Office
Sean Whelan, Governor's Office
Steve Adams, Ogden Newspapers
David Cook, Secretary of State's Office
Maureen Lewis, Secretary of State's Office

The West Virginia Board of Public Works met on Monday, September 29, 2025 at 11:00 a.m. in the Governor's Cabinet and Conference Room of the State Capitol Complex. The meeting was called to order and chaired by Governor Morrissey. A quorum of members was established.

The first item on the agenda was the approval of minutes from the July 31, 2025 West Virginia Board of Public Works meeting. Auditor Hunt made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Leonhardt seconded. The motion carried.

The second item on the agenda was the formal receipt of the tentative assessments for public utility companies for tax year 2026 for review, as required by W. Va. Code §11-6-11. Governor Morrissey stated that the Board convenes by October 1st each year to formally receive the tentative assessments, but no formal action is taken on deliberation. This allows the Tax Commissioner to obtain requests and appeals. The Board generally comes back in January to finalize them. Commissioner Irby addressed the Board. He explained that the Property Tax Division prepared the public utility tentative assessed values for 2026 and delivered them to Board members. They represent an approximate 10% increase from last year, or 1.5 billion dollars. He continued that the primary amount of the increase is due to the addition of the large pipeline project that became operational in June 2024. This is the first time it has been assessable by the Board. Governor Morrissey asked how much of that increase will be realized by the State. Commissioner Irby replied

that there is a small proportionate amount for the State. Most of it will go to the Counties. Commissioner Leonhardt asked if that increase is related to the decrease in value of the gas storage companies. Commissioner Irby replied that a main contributor to the gas storage values is the price of gas. Lower gas prices result in lower values. Commissioner Irby stated that today's meeting is for acceptance of the tentative values. There will be an opportunity for the companies to address the Board with objections. During the process, the Tax Department will engage with the companies and consider additional information they may provide regarding their valuation. The Board will come back to consider all of these factors and vote to finalize the assessments at a later date. This is the start of the formalized process for establishing values. Governor Morrissey asked, aside from the change from the pipeline, if there are any other trend lines that the public and the Board should know. Commissioner Irby responded that most of the utility categories have leveled off. A few years of significant increases in values trended along with inflation. With inflation becoming more stable, the values are flattening out. In addition, settled lawsuits are not reflected in the numbers.

Commissioner Leonhardt made a motion to formally receive the tentative 2026 public utility assessments. Auditor Hunt seconded. The motion carried.

The third item on the agenda was consideration of the following deed seeking approval by the Board of Public Works:

1. Between the City of Huntington and the West Virginia Department of Transportation, Division of Highways, dated February 11, 2025, approved as to form by the Attorney General's office September 22, 2025.

Sarah Runyon addressed the Board. She explained that this is a corrective deed between the City and the Division of Highways involving the upgrade of Hal Greer Boulevard. The City initiated the project and asked Highways to take it over. Four deeds regarding this project were approved at the last Board of Public Works meeting, correcting the names on the Right of Ways.

Auditor Hunt made a motion to approve the deed. Commissioner Leonhardt seconded. The motion carried.

The final item on the agenda was to recess the meeting. Auditor Hunt made a motion to recess the meeting until the public hearing for the tentative public utility tax assessments. Secretary Warner seconded. The motion carried. The meeting recessed.



Kris Warner, Secretary of State
and Ex-Officio Secretary of the
WV Board of Public Works