

HODGE UTILITY OPERATING COMPANY

Hodge, Louisiana

Financial Statements

As of and for the Year Ended December 31, 2024

HODGE UTILITY OPERATING COMPANY
Hodge, Louisiana
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As of and for the Year Ended December 31, 2024

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INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

**Board of Commissioners
Hodge Utility Operating Company
Hodge, Louisiana**

Opinions

We have audited the accompanying accrual basis financial statements of the enterprise fund of the **Hodge Utility Operating Company**, as of and for the year ended December 31, 2024, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the Hodge Utility Operating Company's basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the enterprise fund of the Hodge Utility Operating Company, as of December 31, 2024, and the respective changes in financial position and, where applicable, cash flows thereof for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinions

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Hodge Utility Operating Company, and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.

Emphasis of Matter

As described in Note 1, the financial statements include two total columns for financial analysis only and are not in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. In addition, the total cost of the Combined Utility System of the Village of Hodge is underwritten by a publicly traded company and depreciation is not reported on the financial statements. Our opinion is not modified with respect to this matter.

**Board of Commissioners
Hodge Utility Operating Company
Hodge, Louisiana**

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America and for the design implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Hodge Utility Operating Company's ability to continue as a going concern for twelve months beyond the financial statement date, including any currently known information that may raise substantial doubt shortly thereafter.

Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinions. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and Government Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and Government Auditing Standards, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Hodge Utility Operating Company's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.

**Board of Commissioners
Hodge Utility Operating Company
Hodge, Louisiana**

- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Hodge Utility Operating Company's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

Required Supplementary Information

Management has omitted the management's discussion and analysis that accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require to be presented to supplement the basic financial statements. Such missing information, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board who considers it to be an essential part of the financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. Our opinion on the basic financial statements is not affected by this missing information.

Supplementary Information

Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming opinions on the financial statements that collectively comprise the Hodge Utility Operating Company's basic financial statements. The Schedule of Compensation, Benefits, and Other Payments to Agency Head is presented for the purposes of additional analysis and are not a required part of the basic financial statements.

The Schedule of Compensation, Benefits, and Other Payments to Agency Head is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the basic financial statements. Such information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the basic financial statements or to the basic financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the Schedule of Compensation, Benefits, and Other Payments to Agency Head is fairly stated, in all material respects, in relation to the basic financial statements as a whole.

**Board of Commissioners
Hodge Utility Operating Company
Hodge, Louisiana**

Other Reporting Required by *Government Auditing Standards*

In accordance with Government Auditing Standards, we have also issued our report dated June 30, 2025, on our consideration of the Hodge Utility Operating Company's internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with Government Auditing Standards in considering the Hodge Utility Operating Company's internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

Woodard & Associates

(A Professional Accounting Corporation)
Monroe, Louisiana

June 30, 2025

BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

HODGE UTILITY OPERATING COMPANY

Hodge, Louisiana

Statement of Net Position

December 31, 2024

			Total (Memorandum Only)	
	Combined Utility System	Hodge Utility Operating Company	2024	2023
Assets				
Current assets				
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Due from other funds	-	2,765,467	2,765,467	2,708,290
Total current assets	-	2,765,467	2,765,467	2,708,290
Restricted assets				
Cash and cash equivalents	108,092	-	108,092	52,792
Receivables - Hodge customers	23,696	-	23,696	25,058
Total restricted assets	131,788	-	131,788	77,850
Noncurrent assets				
Capital assets, net	92,616,111	-	92,616,111	216,731,332
Total noncurrent assets	92,616,111	-	92,616,111	216,731,332
Total assets	92,747,899	2,765,467	95,513,366	219,517,472
Liabilities				
Current liabilities (payable from current assets)				
Accounts payable	-	2,765,467	2,765,467	2,708,290
Current liabilities payable from restricted assets				
Due to other funds	2,765,467	-	2,765,467	2,708,290
Total current liabilities	2,765,467	2,765,467	5,530,934	5,416,580
Total liabilities	2,765,467	2,765,467	5,530,934	5,416,580
Net position				
Net investment in capital assets	28,136,837	-	28,136,837	152,252,059
Unrestricted	61,845,595	-	61,845,595	61,848,834
Total net position	\$ 89,982,432	\$ -	\$ 89,982,432	\$ 214,100,893

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

HODGE UTILITY OPERATING COMPANY

Hodge, Louisiana

Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Position

For the Year Ended December 31, 2024

		Total (Memorandum Only)		
Combined Utility System	Hodge Utility Operating Company	2024	2023	
Operating revenues				
Charges for services				
West Rock	\$ (97,563,675)	\$ -	\$ (97,563,675)	\$ 51,593,136
Hodge residents and sewer revenue:	168,389	-	168,389	171,840
Hodge water and sewer revenues	2,550	-	2,550	2,550
Operating fees	-	26,725,725	26,725,725	33,218,367
Total operating revenues	(97,392,736)	26,725,725	(70,667,010)	84,985,893
Operating expenses				
Operating fees	26,725,725	-	26,725,725	33,218,367
Fuel	-	18,130,782	18,130,782	21,129,400
Purchased electricity	-	8,477,942	8,477,942	11,888,265
Purchased outside services	-	115,961	115,961	198,892
Miscellaneous	-	1,040	1,040	1,810
Total operating expenses	26,725,725	26,725,725	53,451,450	66,436,734
Operating income / (loss)				
	(124,118,461)	-	(124,118,461)	18,549,159
Change in net position				
	(124,118,461)	-	(124,118,461)	18,549,159
Net position at beginning of year				
	214,100,893	-	214,100,893	195,551,734
				-
Total net position at end of year				
	\$ 89,982,432	\$ -	\$ 89,982,432	\$ 214,100,893

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

HODGE UTILITY OPERATING COMPANY

Hodge, Louisiana

Statement of Cash Flows

As of and for the Year Ended December 31, 2024

Combined Utility System	Hodge Utility Operating Company	Total (Memorandum Only)	
		2024	2023

Cash flows form operating activities

Net income (loss)	\$ (124,118,461)	\$ -	\$ (124,118,461)	\$ 18,549,159
Adjustments				
Net changes in assets and liabilities				
Receivables - Hodge customers	1,362	-	1,362	4,281
Due from Village of Hodge Combined Utility System	-	(57,177)	(57,177)	(146,545)
Account payable - special	-	57,177	57,177	146,545
Due to operating company	57,177	-	57,177	146,545
Net cash provided (used) by operating activities	(124,059,922)	-	(124,059,922)	18,699,985

Cash flows from non-capital financing

Net cash provided by (used for) non-capital financing act	-	-	-	-
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Cash flows from capital and related financing activities

Acquisition of capital assets	(11,148,296)	-	(11,148,296)	(17,555,270)
Disposition of capital assets	135,263,517	-	135,263,517	1,634,669
Net cash provided by (used for) non-capital financing activi	124,115,221	-	124,115,221	(15,920,601)

Cash flows from investing activities

Net cash provided by (used for) investing activities	-	-	-	-
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Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	55,299	-	55,299	2,779,384
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Cash and cash equivalents - December 31, 2023	2,855,132	-	2,855,132	75,748
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Cash and cash equivalents - December 31, 2024	\$ 2,910,431	\$ -	\$ 2,910,431	\$ 2,855,132
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The cash in the individuals funds accounts are considered agency accounts being held on behalf of the individuals and therefore are not included on the statements of cash flows.

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

HODGE UTILITY OPERATING COMPANY

Hodge, Louisiana

Notes to the Financial Statements

As of and for the year ended December 31, 2024

Organizational and Historical Background

The qualified electors of the Village of Hodge, Louisiana, and resident property taxpayers of said Village approved the issuance of \$65,000,000 in Combined Utility System Revenue Bonds under indenture of mortgage, dated March 1, 1972.

The Village entered into an Acquisition and Construction Agreement on March 1, 1972 with Continental Group, Inc., whereby the Village acquired the existing combined water, sewerage and electric generating facilities, and agreed to purchase improvements made to the existing system by Continental Group, Inc. and to acquire or construct electric distribution facilities within the Village. The system, acquired and completed, is known as the "Combined Utility System." The Village entered into an agreement with the Hodge Utility Operating Company on March 1, 1972 whereby the Operating Company was to operate and manage the system upon terms and conditions as set forth in the contract.

Effective October 8, 1983, Continental Group, Inc. transferred to its successor, Stone Container Corporation, Chicago, Illinois, all of its obligations under the acquisition and construction agreement, utility contract, indenture of mortgage and operating agreement, each dated March 1, 1972.

On January 24, 1990, the Village issued \$93,000,000 of its Combined Utility System Revenue Bonds, Series 1990, under a bond indenture dated January 1, 1990, authorized by a resolution duly passed and approved by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the Village. The bonds were issued for the principle purpose of financing the replacement of a recovery boiler and associated equipment. The bonds were secured by a security interest in revenues derived by the Village from operation of the Combined Utility System (subject to the pledge of the first lien on revenues created by the Indenture of Mortgage securing the series 1972 bonds) and other funds.

On May 10, 1998, Jefferson Smurfit Corporation, a Delaware Corporation, now known as Smurfit-Stone Container Corporation entered into an Agreement and Plan of Merger with JSC Acquisition Corporation, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Company, and Stone Container Corporation. Pursuant to the terms of the Merger Agreement, JSC Acquisition was merged with and into Stone on November 18, 1998. On November 1, 2004, Jefferson Smurfit Corporation, a Delaware Corporation, entered into a merger agreement with Stone Container Corporation, under the name of Smurfit Stone Container Enterprises, Inc., a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of Delaware.

On December 18, 2003, the Village of Hodge issued \$58,085,000 of the Village of Hodge Refunding Bonds Series 2003. The bonds were issued to refund the Series 1972 and 1990 bonds and to finance needed capital improvements.

HODGE UTILITY OPERATING COMPANY

Hodge, Louisiana

Notes to the Financial Statements

As of and for the year ended December 31, 2024

After the 2009 Chapter 11 bankruptcy of Smurfit Stone Container Enterprises, and the subsequent default of the Hodge Utility Operating Company on interest payments for the 2003 Bonds, a Settlement Agreement was reached between the Village of Hodge, the Hodge Utility Operating Company, and the Bond Trustee and/or 2003 Bondholders. This agreement satisfied all obligations to the 2003 Bondholders and effectively removed the \$58,085,000 liability from the Village of Hodge, the Hodge Utility Operating Company and SSCE. The Village of Hodge and the Hodge Utility Operating Company entered into an amended and restated operating agreement that became effective June 30, 2010.

On May 27, 2011, at a Smurfit Stone Container Enterprises stockholder meeting, stockholders voted to approve a merger with Rock-Tenn Company, a Georgia corporation. Rock-Tenn agreed to purchase all outstanding SSCE's common stock. Under the amended and restated operating agreement, Rock-Tenn became the successor of SSCE and continued to operate per the June 30, 2010 operating agreement.

On July 1, 2015, Rock-Tenn completed a merger with MeadWestvaco, forming the company, WestRock. WestRock continues to operate under the amended and restated operating agreement that was put into effect on June 30, 2010.

Note 1 – Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

The accounting and reporting practices of the Combined Utility System, Village of Hodge, and the Hodge Utility Operating Company conformed to the requirements of the amended and restated operating agreement dated June 30, 2010, which do not necessarily conform to generally accepted accounting principles applied to governmental accounting.

A. Basis of Presentation

The Combined Utility System of the Village of Hodge and the Hodge Utility Operating Company is accounted for using the accrual basis of accounting. Revenues are recognized when they are earned and expenses are recognized when they are incurred. Receivables billed and not paid and accounts payable (expenses incurred) are recorded monthly. Operating revenues are those revenues generated from the primary operations of the fund. All other revenues are reported as non-operating revenues. Operating expenses are those expenses that are essential to the primary operations of the fund. All other expenses are reported as non-operating expenses.

B. Reporting Entity

This report includes two proprietary funds, the Combined Utility System, Village of Hodge, and the Hodge Utility Operating Company. The Combined Utility System is controlled by the

HODGE UTILITY OPERATING COMPANY

Hodge, Louisiana

Notes to the Financial Statements

As of and for the year ended December 31, 2024

Village executive and legislative branches (the Mayor and Board of Aldermen), whereas the Hodge Utility Operating Company is controlled by the Hodge Utility Operating Company

Board of Directors. However, since the Hodge Utility Operating Company operates and manages the System upon the terms and conditions of the operating agreement, the Village of Hodge does not exercise significant oversight responsibility over the System. The specific elements of oversight responsibility considered in the decision to exclude the Combined Utility System were financial interdependency, the ability to significantly influence operations, and accountability for fiscal matters. Therefore, this report is not included as a component unit of the Village of Hodge, and there are no excluded component units in this report.

C. Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash includes amounts in demand deposits, interest-bearing demand deposits, and time deposits. Cash equivalents include amounts in time deposits and those investments with original maturities of 90 days or less. Under state law, the Hodge Utility Operating Company may deposit funds in demand deposits, interest-bearing demand deposits, or time deposits with state banks organized under Louisiana law or any other state of the United States, or under the laws of the United States.

D. Fixed Assets and Long-Term Liabilities

The Utility System is accounted for on the economic resources measurement focus. This means that all assets and liabilities (whether current or noncurrent) associated with their activity are included on their balance sheet. The reported fund equity (net total position) is segregated into contributed capital and net position components.

Depreciation on all exhaustible fixed assets used by the proprietary fund should be charged as an expense against their operations in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. Accumulated depreciation should also be reported on the proprietary fund Statement of Net Position.

Total cost of the Combined Utility System of the Village of Hodge is underwritten by WestRock; therefore, depreciation, an operating cost not requiring cash outlay, is not reported on the financial statements of the Combined Utility System of the Village of Hodge.

E. Total Columns

Total Columns on the statements are captioned "Memorandum Only" to indicate that they are presented only to facilitate financial analysis. Data in these columns does not present financial position in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. Neither is such data comparable to a consolidation. Interfund eliminations have not been made in the aggregation of this data.

HODGE UTILITY OPERATING COMPANY

Hodge, Louisiana

Notes to the Financial Statements

As of and for the year ended December 31, 2024

Note 2 – Cash, Cash Equivalents, and Investments

On December 31, 2024, the Hodge Utility Operating Company had cash and cash equivalents (book balances) totaling \$108,092, all of which was in demand deposits. These deposits are stated at cost, which approximates market. Under state law, these deposits (or the resulting bank balances) must be secured by federal deposit insurance or the pledge of securities owned by the fiscal agent bank.

The market value of the pledged securities plus the federal deposit insurance must at all times equal the amount on deposit with the fiscal agent.

On December 31, 2024, the Hodge Utility Operating Company had \$108,092 in deposits (collected bank balances). These deposits are secured from risk by \$250,000 federal deposit insurance.

Even though pledged securities are considered uncollateralized under the provisions of GASB Statement No. 40, Louisiana Revised Statute 30:1229 imposes a statutory requirement on the custodial bank to advertise and sell the pledged securities within 10 days of being notified that the fiscal agent has failed to pay deposited funds upon demand. Louisiana R.S. 39:1224 requires bonds, or other such instruments furnished as security, to be deposited with the depositing authority or with an unaffiliated bank or trust company, Federal Reserve Bank, or any Federal Home Loan Bank or its successor. This security is deemed to be under the control and in the possession of the public entity and deemed to be held in its name. The Hodge Utility Operating Company was not required to have pledged securities because the cash balance of all accounts was below the federal depository insurance coverage.

Cash and investments are categorized to give an indication of the level of risk assumed by the Combined Utility System on December 31, 2024. Deposits are considered to be exposed to custodial credit risk if they are not covered by depository insurance and the deposits are (a) uncollateralized, (b) collateralized with securities held by the pledging financial institution, or (c) collateralized with securities held by the pledging financial institution's trust department or agent but not in the depositor-government's name. The Hodge Utility Operating Company's cash and cash equivalents balances were completely covered by \$250,000 of federal depository insurance. The HUOC did not have a custodial credit risk policy.

On December 31, 2024, the Hodge Utility Operating Company had no investments.

HODGE UTILITY OPERATING COMPANY

Hodge, Louisiana

Notes to the Financial Statements

As of and for the year ended December 31, 2024

Note 3 – Receivables

The receivables of \$23,696 on December 31, 2024, were for charges for services.

Note 4 – Changes in Plant, Property, and Equipment

A summary of changes in plant, property, and equipment for the year ended December 31, 2024, is below. Plant, property, and equipment are not depreciated as indicated in Note 1.

	Receivable	Payable
Village of Hodge Combined Utility Company	2,765,467	
Hodge Utility Operating Company		2,765,467
Total	2,765,467	2,765,467

Note 5 – Interfund Receivables and Payables

Interfund receivables and payables at December 31, 2024, are as follows:

	Balance, January 1, 2024	Additions	Disposals	Balance, December 31, 2024
Property, Plant, And Equipment	216,731,332	11,148,295	135,263,517	92,616,111

Note 6 – Employees' Retirement

Neither the Combined Utility System nor the Hodge Utility Operating Company has employees receiving pay directly. No retirement system exists. All employees and related retirement are carried by West Rock.

Note 7 – Related Party Transactions

Serving on the Board of Directors of the Hodge Utility Operating Company ("Operating Company") is the Mayor of the Village of Hodge, Louisiana. The Village of Hodge is considered to be a related party. During the year ended December 31, 2024, revenues received by the Operating Company from the Village of Hodge for water and sewer usage were \$2,550. Expenses paid to the Village of Hodge were \$107,461.

HODGE UTILITY OPERATING COMPANY

Hodge, Louisiana

Notes to the Financial Statements

As of and for the year ended December 31, 2024

Note 8 – Subsequent Events

Management has evaluated subsequent events through the date that the financial statements were available to be issued, June 30, 2025, and determined that no events occurred that require disclosure. No subsequent events occurring after this date have been evaluated for inclusion in these financial statements.

HODGE UTILITY OPERATING COMPANY

Hodge, Louisiana

Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs

For the Year Ended August 31, 2023

We have audited the basic financial statements of the Hodge Utility Operating Company as of and for the year ended December 31, 2024, and have issued our report thereon dated June 30, 2025. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in Governmental Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Our audit of the financial statements as of December 31, 2024, resulted in an unqualified opinion.

Schedule I – Summary of Auditor’s Report

Report to Internal Control and Compliance Material to Financial Statements:

Internal Control

Material Weakness ___Yes XNo

Significant Deficiencies ___Yes XNo

Compliance

Compliance Material to Financial Statements ___Yes XNo

Schedule II – Findings – Financial Statements Audit

Current Year

No current year findings.

Prior Year

No prior year findings.

WEST OUACHITA SEWERAGE DISTRICT NO. 5

Monroe, Louisiana

Summary Status of Prior Year Findings

For the Year Ended August 31, 2023

The following is a summary of the status of the prior year findings included in our audit report dated May 10, 2024, covering the audit of the financial statements of Hodge Utility Operating Company as of and for the year ended December 31, 2023.

Financial Statements Findings Reported in Accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* for the fiscal year ended 2023.

Prior Year

No prior year findings.



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**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON INTERNAL CONTROL OVER
FINANCIAL REPORTING AND ON COMPLIANCE AND OTHER MATTERS
BASED ON AN AUDIT OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS PERFORMED IN
ACCORDANCE WITH *GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS***

**Board of Commissioners
Hodge Utility Operating Company
Hodge, Louisiana**

We have audited, in accordance with the auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, the basic financial statements of the enterprise fund of the **Hodge Utility Operating Company**, as of and for the year ended December 31, 2024, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the Hodge Utility Operating Company's basic financial statements and have issued our report thereon dated June 30, 2025.

Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements, we considered the Hodge Utility Operating Company's internal control over financial reporting (internal control) as a basis for designing audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances for the purpose of expressing our opinions on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Hodge Utility Operating Company's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the Hodge Utility Operating Company's internal control.

A deficiency in internal control exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct misstatements on a timely basis. A material weakness is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the entity's financial statements will not be prevented, or detected and corrected on a timely basis. A significant deficiency is a deficiency, or combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

Our consideration of internal control over financial reporting was for the limited purpose described in the first paragraph of this section and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies and therefore, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies may exist that were not identified. Given these limitations,

**Board of Commissioners
West Ouachita Sewerage District No. 5
West Monroe, Louisiana**

during our audit, we did not identify any deficiencies in internal control that we consider to be material weaknesses. However, material weaknesses may exist that have not been identified.

Report on Compliance and Other Matters

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the Hodge Utility Operating Company's financial statements are free of material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the determination of financial statement amounts. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit and, accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under Government Auditing Standards.

Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control and compliance and the result of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control or on compliance. This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with Government Auditing Standards in considering the Hodge Utility Operating Company's internal control and compliance. Accordingly, this communication is not suitable for any other purpose.

Woodland & Associates

(A Professional Accounting Corporation)
Monroe, Louisiana

June 30, 2025



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INDEPENDENT ACCOUNTANTS' REPORT ON APPLYING AGREED-UPON PROCEDURES

**To the Hodge Utility Operating Company's Board of Directors
and the Louisiana Legislative Auditor**

We have performed the procedures enumerated below on the control and compliance (C/C) areas identified in the Louisiana Legislative Auditor's (LLA's) Statewide Agreed-Upon Procedures (SAUPs) for the fiscal period January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024. **Hodge Utility Operating Company's** management is responsible for those C/C areas identified in the SAUPs.

Hodge Utility Operating Company has agreed to and acknowledged that the procedures performed are appropriate to meet the intended purpose of the engagement, which is to perform specified procedures on the C/C areas identified in the LLA's SAUPs for the fiscal period January through December 31, 2024. Additionally, the LLA has agreed to and acknowledged that the procedures performed are appropriate for its purposes. This report may not be suitable for any other purpose. The procedures performed may not address all the items of interest to a user of this report and may not meet the needs of all users of this report and, as such, users are responsible for determining whether the procedures performed are appropriate for their purposes.

The procedures and associated findings are as follows:

1) Written Policies and Procedures

- A. Obtain and inspect the entity's written policies and procedures and observe whether they address each of the following categories and subcategories if applicable to public funds and the entity's operations:
- i. ***Budgeting***, including preparing, adopting, monitoring, and amending the budget.
 - ii. ***Purchasing***, including (1) how purchases are initiated, (2) how vendors are added to the vendor list, (3) the preparation and approval process of purchase requisitions and purchase orders, (4) controls to ensure compliance with the Public Bid Law, and (5) documentation required to be maintained for all bids and price quotes.
 - iii. ***Disbursements***, including processing, reviewing, and approving.
 - iv. ***Receipts/Collections***, including receiving, recording, and preparing deposits. Also, policies and procedures should include management's actions to determine the completeness of all collections for each type of revenue or agency fund additions (e.g., periodic confirmation with outside parties, reconciliation to utility billing after cutoff procedures, reconciliation of traffic ticket number sequences, agency fund forfeiture monies confirmation).

- g) ***Credit Cards (and debit cards, fuel cards, P-Cards, if applicable)***, including (1) how cards are to be controlled, (2) allowable business uses, (3) documentation requirements, (4) required approvers of statements, and (5) monitoring card usage.
- h) ***Travel and expense reimbursement***, including (1) allowable expenses, (2) dollar thresholds by category of expense, (3) documentation requirements, and (4) required approvers.
- i) ***Information Technology Disaster Recovery/Business Continuity***, including (1) identification of critical data and frequency of data backups, (2) storage of backups in a separate physical location isolated from the network, (3) periodic testing/verification that backups can be restored, (4) use of antivirus software on all systems, (5) timely application of all available system and software patches/updates, and (6) identification of personnel, processes, and tools needed to recover operations after a critical event.

Result: Procedure was not performed as the Company was exempt from testing.

Board or Finance Committee

- 2. Obtain and inspect the board/finance committee minutes for the fiscal period, as well as the board's enabling legislation, charter, bylaws, or equivalent document in effect during the fiscal period, and:
 - a) Observe that the board/finance committee met with a quorum at least monthly, or on a frequency in accordance with the board's enabling legislation, charter, bylaws, or other equivalent document.
 - b) Observe whether the minutes referenced or included monthly budget-to-actual comparisons on the general fund, quarterly budget-to-actual comparisons, at a minimum, on all proprietary funds, and semi-annual budget-to-actual comparisons, at a minimum, on all special revenue funds.
 - c) Obtain the prior year audit report and observe the unassigned fund balance in the general fund. If the general fund had a negative ending unassigned fund balance in the prior year audit report, observe that the minutes for at least one meeting during the fiscal period referenced or included a formal plan to eliminate the negative unassigned fund balance in the general fund.
 - d) Observe whether the board/finance committee received written updates of the progress of resolving audit finding(s), according to management's corrective action plan at each meeting until the findings are considered fully resolved.

Result: Procedure was not performed as the Company was exempt from testing.

Bank Reconciliations

- 3. Obtain a listing of entity bank accounts for the fiscal period from management and management's representation that the listing is complete. Ask management to identify the entity's main operating account. Select the entity's main operating account and randomly select 4 additional accounts (or all accounts if less than 5). Randomly select one month from the fiscal period, obtain and inspect the corresponding bank statement and reconciliation for each selected account, and observe that:

- a) Bank reconciliations include evidence that they were prepared within 2 months of the related statement closing date (e.g., initialed and dated or electronically logged); and
- b) Bank reconciliations include evidence that a member of management/board member who does not handle cash, post ledgers, or issue checks has reviewed each bank reconciliation within 1 month of the date the reconciliation was prepared.

Result: Procedure was not performed as the Company was exempt from testing.

Collections (excluding electronic funds transfers)

- 4. Obtain a listing of deposit sites_for the fiscal period where deposits for cash/checks/money orders (cash) are prepared and management's representation that the listing is complete. Randomly select 5 deposit sites (or all deposit sites if less than 5).
- 5. For each deposit site selected, obtain a listing of collection locations and management's representation that the listing is complete. Randomly select one collection location for each deposit site (i.e. 5 collection locations for 5 deposit sites), obtain and inspect written policies and procedures relating to employee job duties (if no written policies or procedures, inquire of employees about their job duties) at each collection location, and observe that job duties are properly segregated at each collection location such that:
 - a) Employees that are responsible for cash collections do not share cash drawers/registers.
 - b) Each employee responsible for collecting cash is not responsible for preparing/making bank deposits, unless another employee/official is responsible for reconciling collection documentation to the deposit.
 - c) Each employee responsible for collecting cash is not responsible for posting collection entries to the general ledger or subsidiary ledgers, unless another employee/official is responsible for reconciling ledger postings to each other and to the deposit.
 - d) The employee(s) responsible for reconciling cash collections to the general ledger and/or subsidiary ledgers, by revenue source and/or agency fund additions, are not responsible for collecting cash, unless another employee/official verifies the reconciliation.
- 6. Obtain from management a copy of the bond or insurance policy for theft covering all employees who have access to cash. Observe that the bond or insurance policy for theft was enforced during the fiscal period.
- 7. Randomly select two deposit dates for each of the 5 bank accounts selected for procedure #3 under "Bank Reconciliations" above (select the next deposit date chronologically if no deposits were made on the dates randomly selected and randomly select a deposit if multiple deposits are made on the same day). Obtain supporting documentation for each of the 10 deposits and:
 - a) Observe that receipts are sequentially pre-numbered.
 - b) Trace sequentially pre-numbered receipts, system reports, and other related collection documentation to the deposit slip.
 - c) Trace the deposit slip total to the actual deposit per the bank statement.
 - d) Observe that the deposit was made within one business day of receipt at the collection location (within one week if the depository is more than 10 miles from the collection location or the deposit is less than \$100 and the cash is stored securely in a locked safe or drawer).
 - e) Trace the actual deposit per the bank statement to the general ledger.

Result: Procedure was not performed as the Company was exempt from testing.

Non-Payroll Disbursements (excluding card purchases/payments, travel reimbursements, and petty cash purchases)

8. Obtain a listing of locations that process payments for the fiscal period and management's representation that the listing is complete. Randomly select 5 locations (or all locations if less than 5).
9. For each location selected under #8 above, obtain a listing of those employees involved with non-payroll purchasing and payment functions. Obtain written policies and procedures relating to employee job duties (if the agency has no written policies and procedures, inquire of employees about their job duties), and observe that job duties are properly segregated such that:
 - a) At least two employees are involved in initiating a purchase request, approving a purchase, and placing an order/making the purchase.
 - b) At least two employees are involved in processing and approving payments to vendors.
 - c) The employee responsible for processing payments is prohibited from adding/modifying vendor files, unless another employee is responsible for periodically reviewing changes to vendor files.
 - d) Either the employee/official responsible for signing checks mails the payment or gives the signed checks to an employee to mail who is not responsible for processing payments.
 - e) Only employees/officials authorized to sign checks approve the electronic disbursement of funds, whether through automated clearinghouse (ACH), electronic funds transfer (EFT), wire transfer, or some other electronic means.
10. For each location selected under #8 above, obtain the entity's non-payroll disbursement transaction population (excluding cards and travel reimbursements) and obtain management's representation that the population is complete. Randomly select 5 disbursements for each location, obtain supporting documentation for each transaction and:
 - a) Observe that the disbursement matched the related original itemized invoice and that supporting documentation indicates that deliverables included on the invoice were received by the entity.
 - b) Observe that the disbursement documentation included evidence (e.g., initial/date, electronic logging) of segregation of duties tested under #9, as applicable.
11. Using the entity's main operating account and the month selected in Bank Reconciliations procedure, randomly select 5 non-payroll-related electronic disbursements (or all electronic disbursements if less than 5) and observe that:
 - a) Each electronic disbursement was approved only by those persons authorized to disburse funds (e.g. sign checks) per the entity's policy.
 - b) Each electronic disbursement was approved by the required number of authorized signers per the entity's policy.

Result: Procedure was not performed as the Company was exempt from testing.

Credit Cards/Debit Cards/Fuel Cards/P-Cards (Cards)

12. Obtain from management a listing of all active credit cards, bank debit cards, fuel cards, and purchase cards (cards) for the fiscal period, including the card numbers and the names of the persons who maintained possession of the cards. Obtain management's representation that the listing is complete.

13. Using the listing prepared by management, randomly select 5 cards (or all cards if less than 5) that were used during the fiscal period. Randomly select one monthly statement or combined statement for each card, obtain supporting documentation, and:
 - a) Observe that there is evidence that the monthly statement or combined statement and supporting documentation was reviewed and approved, in writing (or electronically approved), by someone other than the authorized card holder.
 - b) Observe that finance charges and late fees were not assessed on the selected statements.
14. Using the monthly statements or combined statements selected under #12 above, excluding fuel cards, randomly select 10 transactions (or all transactions if less than 10) from each statement, and obtain supporting documentation for the transactions. For each transaction, observe that it is supported by (1) an original itemized receipt that identifies precisely what was purchased, (2) written documentation of the business/public purpose, and (3) documentation of the individuals participating in meals (for meal charges only).

Result: Procedure was not performed as the Company was exempt from testing.

Travel and Travel-Related Expense Reimbursement (excluding card transactions)

15. Obtain from management a listing of all travel and travel-related expense reimbursements during the fiscal period and management's representation that the listing or general ledger is complete. Randomly select 5 reimbursements, obtain the related expense reimbursement forms/prepaid expense documentation of each selected reimbursement, as well as the supporting documentation. For each of the 5 reimbursements selected:
 - a) If reimbursed using a per diem, observe that the approved reimbursement rate is no more than those rates established either by the State of Louisiana or the U.S. General Services Administration (www.gsa.gov).
 - b) If reimbursed using actual costs, observe that the reimbursement is supported by an original itemized receipt that identifies precisely what was purchased.
 - c) Observe that each reimbursement is supported by documentation of the business/public purpose (for meal charges, observe that the documentation includes the names of those individuals participating) and other documentation required by written policy.
 - d) Observe that each reimbursement was reviewed and approved, in writing, by someone other than the person receiving reimbursement.

Result: Procedure was not performed as the Company was exempt from testing.

Contracts

16. Obtain from management a listing of all agreements/contracts for professional services, materials and supplies, leases, and construction activities that were initiated or renewed during the fiscal period. Obtain management's representation that the listing is complete. Randomly select 5 contracts (or all contracts if less than 5) from the listing, excluding the practitioner's contract, and:
 - a) Observe that the contract was bid in accordance with the Louisiana Public Bid Law (e.g., solicited quotes or bids, advertised), if required by law.
 - b) Observe that the contract was approved by the governing body/board, if required by policy or law.

- c) If the contract was amended, observe that the original contract terms provided for such an amendment and that amendments were made in compliance with the contract terms.
- d) Randomly select one payment from the fiscal period for each of the 5 contracts, obtain the supporting invoice, agree the invoice to the contract terms, and observe that the invoice and related payment agreed to the terms and conditions of the contract.

Result: Procedure was not performed as the Company was exempt from testing.

Payroll and Personnel

- 17. Obtain a listing of employees and officials employed during the fiscal period and management's representation that the listing is complete. Randomly select 5 employees or officials, obtain related paid salaries and personnel files, and agree paid salaries to authorized salaries/pay rates in the personnel files.
- 18. Randomly select one pay period during the fiscal period. For the 5 employees or officials selected under #17 above, obtain attendance records and leave documentation for the pay period, and:
 - a) Observe that all selected employees or officials documented their daily attendance and leave.
 - b) Observe that supervisors approved the attendance and leave of the selected employees or officials.
 - c) Observe that any leave accrued or taken during the pay period is reflected in the entity's cumulative leave records.
 - d) Observe that the rate paid to the employees or officials agree to the authorized salary/pay rate found within the personnel file.
- 19. Obtain a listing of those employees or officials that received termination payments during the fiscal period and management's representation that the list is complete.
- 20. Obtain management's representation that employer and employee portions of third-party payroll related amounts (e.g. payroll taxes, retirement contributions, health insurance premiums, garnishments, workers' compensation premiums, etc.) have been paid, and any associated forms have been filed, by required deadlines.

Result: Procedure was not performed as the Company was exempt from testing.

Fraud Notice

- 21. Obtain a listing of misappropriations of public funds and assets during the fiscal period and management's representation that the listing is complete. Select all misappropriations on the listing, obtain supporting documentation, and observe that the entity reported the misappropriation(s) to the legislative auditor and the district attorney of the parish in which the entity is domiciled.
- 22. Observe that the entity has posted on its premises and website, the notice required by R.S. 24:523.1 concerning the reporting of misappropriation, fraud, waste, or abuse of public funds.

Result: Procedure was not performed as the Company was exempt from testing.

- iii. Number of complaints which resulted in a finding that sexual harassment occurred.
- iv. Number of complaints in which the finding of sexual harassment resulted in discipline or corrective action; and
- v. The amount of time it took to resolve each complaint.

Result: We noted no exceptions.

Management's Responses to Results

HUOC will have written policies and procedures for disaster recovery in the new year. HUOC will buy new receipts with unique numbers to replace the old receipts. Management will sign off on time sheets to approve time off and salary rates will be documented in the employee personnel files. All employees will take ethics course yearly; one employee left and then returned during the new year that caused him not to have his ethics course. We are currently still waiting to receive the sexual harassment course that the OPPJ has to issue. We contacted them multiple times and still have not received the course yet.

Restriction on Use

We are required to be independent of HUOC and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements related to our agreed-upon procedures engagement.

This report is intended solely to describe the scope of testing performed on those C/C areas identified in the SAUPs, and the result of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on control or compliance. Accordingly, this report is not suitable for any other purpose. Under Louisiana Revised Statute 24:513, this report is distributed by the LLA as a public document.

Woodard & Associates

(A Professional Accounting Corporation)
Monroe, Louisiana

June 30, 2025